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A TIME TO KILL: WHEN IS LEADERSHIP TARGETING AN EFFECTIVE COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

by

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This study will argue that leadership targeting may be an effective strategy, but only under specific conditions. It is critical to the security of the United States, for strategic and operational planners, policy makers, and executives, to understand the appropriate environment for undertaking a leadership targeting strategy. This study provides a framework for analyzing the effectiveness of leadership targeting based on critical components of leadership.

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A TIME TO KILL: WHEN IS LEADERSHIP TARGETING AN EFFECTIVE COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

When the United States Government faces a threat from an unconventional and asymmetric terrorist group, one possible counterterrorism strategy is leadership targeting. The value of leadership targeting is based on the expectation of a quick and cheap victory over the enemy by removing the leader from the organization and on a minimal expenditure of assets and resources to achieve these results.

This study will argue that leadership targeting may be an effective strategy, but only under specific conditions. It is critical to the security of the United States, for strategic and operational planners, policy makers, and executives, to understand the appropriate environment for undertaking a leadership targeting strategy. This study provides a framework for analyzing the effectiveness of leadership targeting based on critical components of leadership.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a framework to analyze the effectiveness of leadership targeting. By applying a case study of Abu Musab al Zarqawi to the leadership targeting model, presented by Dr. Michael Freeman and Dr. Gordon McCormick, the results may identify the optimal point to target terrorist leadership during a terrorist organizations development cycle. By applying this model to current terrorist organizations, it may be possible to influence current strategy, doctrine development, and implementation, to better optimize limited resources, resulting in the destruction or marginalization of terrorist organizations.

If the Freeman and McCormick model is useful in defining critical stages of a terrorist organization, the application of leadership decapitation may increase in its effectiveness. Intuitively, a decapitation strategy will experience more success if the leader is critical to the organization. The expectation is that if a leader is central to the development of the group's ideology as well as guiding its operations, decapitation of that source should result in a significant degradation of the organization's capabilities. Conversely, as a leader decentralizes operations and ideology, the organization becomes less vulnerable to the loss of the leader.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Primary Research Question

The primary question this analysis will attempt to answer is: When is leadership targeting, or decapitation,

an effective strategy in countering terrorist organizations? By applying the basic principles of the terrorist leadership targeting model, alternative counterterrorist solutions may become evident. Even though decapitation has proven successful under certain conditions, it should not be a default counterterrorism strategy of the U.S. government and military.

The leadership targeting model may prove more effective as a framework to facilitate a better understanding of how central and critical a leader is to an organization before determining a counterterrorism strategy.

Ultimately, by providing an answer to the research question and providing a case study as a framework, intelligence analysts will be able to more accurately predict the effects of a decapitation strategy. If analysts can reliably and accurately predict effects, they will be enabled to make valuable recommendations to strategic and operational planners resulting in the judicious and effective application of valuable and limited resources.

2. Associated Research Questions

In addition to the primary purpose of the thesis, answers to other related questions might become evident. Specifically, is targeting leaders worth the cost? Based on the application of the model as well as a critical analysis of the information, it may become evident that the benefits of a decapitation strategy may not outweigh the costs associated with pursuing this type of strategy.

The Freeman/McCormick model identifies two primary variables and several sub components for consideration when

framing the value of a leader. Through the application of the case study, other critical leadership characteristics may become evident that are not addressed by the current model. If unaddressed variables become evident, they may be incorporated into the model in order to improve the predictive capabilities and vulnerabilities of terrorist leadership.

Finally, can the model be applied and operationalized? If the model can be applied it may lead analysts, strategists, and planners, to allocate limited resources in a more effective manner that has a greater impact on the marginalization or destruction of developing terrorist organizations.

C.   METHODOLOGY

This study will use a case study of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi and will analyze the development of the organization over time. A method of difference will be used in order to identify significant changes in the organization throughout, ultimately identifying critical points of vulnerability within the organization.

By using a method of difference, a comparison of the three phases will identify differences in the organizations ideology, tactics, targets, demonstrated operational control, rhetoric, media statements, and factors of charisma and influence. Because charisma is a difficult variable to quantify and is even more difficult to determine due to its innate and ambiguous characteristics, evaluating Zarqawi's charisma and how it evolved, strengthened, or dissipated will be difficult to quantify. In order to address this concern a qualitative analysis based on available reporting will be used determine the

level of charismatic influence. The qualitative analysis should determine subtle differences in Zarqawi's charismatic qualities throughout the development of the organization. The analysis will cover three phases of Zarqawi's life, the scope of which are described, in brief, below.

1. **Phase I, Early Experience and Radicalization of Zarqawi: Adolescence to Afghanistan**

The first phase consists of Zarqawi's adolescent years, his first trip to Afghanistan to participate in the anti-Soviet Jihad, his return to Jordan, and subsequent incarceration in the Jordanian prison system. This phase ends with Zarqawi's release from prison and his return to Pakistan.

2. **Phase II, Zarqawi's Early Organizations and Affiliations: From Prison to the Defeat of the Taliban**

The second phase of analysis begins with Zarqawi's return to Afghanistan after his release from prison in Jordan. This phase includes Zarqawi's early operational experience and his establishment and implementation of his training camp in Herat, Afghanistan. This phase of analysis concludes with the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Zarqawi's eventual escape to the Kurdish areas of Northern Iraq and Iran.

3. **Phase III, The Zarqawi Network in Iraq: From Herat to Death**

The third phase focuses on Zarqawi's operations in Iraq after the U.S. invasion. This phase includes an analysis of the network after a formal declaration from Abu Musab al Zarqawi, formalizing his organization's legitimate

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and formal allegiance to Usama Bin Laden and the core Al Qaeda. This phase ends in June 2006 with the death of al Zarqawi.

D.   SCOPE

The scope of this work will be limited to one case study, Abu Musab al Zarqawi as the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, and its application to the terrorist leadership targeting model. The use of a single case may create some concerns with regard to case bias, or selection. As previously discussed, appropriate measures will be implemented in order to mitigate this concern. At the conclusion of this study, additional research may be required to further develop a coherent and sustainable counterterrorism strategy recommendation. In particular, this study will not address assassinations, state leadership targeting, or the legal or moral issues associated with a decapitation strategy.

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II. FREEMAN AND MCCORMICK MODEL

A. OVERVIEW

The model being developed by Freeman and McCormick studies the effectiveness of terrorist leadership targeting as a political-military strategy for defeating terrorist organizations. The authors argue that throughout history militaries have used enemy leadership targeting as a shortcut to victory assuming that the leader of an organization is critical to the success of the organization. Thus, if a leadership targeting strategy is successful, the organization will experience a loss of effectiveness, and the organization may be defeated more rapidly than expected. In other words, in pursuing a leadership targeting strategy, an opponent is looking for a "cheap" victory with reduced costs and avoidance of a protracted struggle. Obviously, the more critical a leader is to an organization, the more vulnerable that organization becomes at the loss of that leader. Freeman and McCormick conclude, however, that this strategy is not always effective and that the removal of a leader is not necessarily an effective strategy. That conclusion makes it even more important to determine and understand the times and circumstances when and why the strategy *is* effective. These questions are the basis of their study's argument.[1]

1. What is Leadership Targeting?

For the purposes of this thesis, leadership targeting refers essentially to military operations designed to capture or kill the leader of a terrorist organization.

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[1] The current paper being produced by Freeman and McCormick is unpublished at this time. The document in its entirety, with complete explanation of leadership targeting, will be forthcoming. For the purpose of this paper, the unpublished version is referenced.

Although in this case study, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed by the U.S. military, the thesis will not differentiate between the effectiveness of kill versus capture operations. For our purposes, both meet the definition of leadership targeting. Throughout the thesis, the term "leadership targeting" will be used interchangeably with the term "decapitation." The discussions will focus on the decapitation of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of the terrorist organization, Al Qaeda in Iraq.

2. Why Decapitation?

A successful leadership targeting strategy that results in the killing or capture of a targeted terrorist leader could result in a quick and decisive victory for the state or state organization using the strategy. The prospect of a quick and decisive victory is appealing politically and therefore is often encouraged or supported as a strategy for success. Throughout history, there are numerous examples of successful leadership targeting. These instances of success are what fuels current politics and encourages the continued use of this strategy in the hope of a quick, cheap, and decisive victory.[2] However, the successful killing or capture of a terrorist leader does not always result in the defeat of his organization. To maintain a more effective campaign against terrorism, therefore, it is important to determine and understand what circumstances make leadership targeting the most effective strategy to use.

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[2] Specific examples of successful leadership targeting are discussed by Cronin in "How Al-Qaeda ends". Cronin cites several cases of successful leadership targeting, including Peru's Shining Path, the Kurdistan Workers Party, the Real Irish Republican Army, and Japan's Aum Shinrikyo and numerous others.

3. What Makes a Leader Important to an Organization?

In the Freeman and McCormick model the authors indicate that the value of a leader can be broadly categorized according to two primary variables: operational leadership and inspirational leadership. Though these two variables are the model's primary components, each is composed of several associated sub-components.

B. INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP VARIABLE

The model's first broad variable is what Freeman and McCormick refer to as "inspirational leadership variable": a combination of the leader's charismatic attributes as well as his/her contributions to the ideology of the group, particularly issues of legitimacy of the group's goals and means."[3] A more detailed description of both variables and their sub-components follows.

A key element in the leadership targeting strategy is to effectively target a leader at a point when the success and continued virility of the organization is largely dependent upon the continued inspirational leadership of this one individual. It is generally assumed that the inspirational variable of leadership will be more difficult to replicate in the early stages of an organization. Thus, it is key to an effective decapitation strategy to interdict the leader before he is able to socialize and institutionalize his inspiration within the organization. Once this inspiration becomes institutionalized, the organization will be less dependent on the unitary leader and, therefore, less vulnerable to his decapitation.[4]

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[3] Michael Freeman and Gordon McCormick, *Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Groups: A Strategic Assessment*, ed. unpublished.

[4] Ibid.

1. Charisma

One variable on the inspirational spectrum is charisma. Generally speaking, the charisma factor is what enables grass-roots collective actions to form around a single individual who provides a population with an alternative to the status quo. Theoretically, the importance of charisma to the leadership targeting strategy is that, for an organization to gain a following and act in open confrontation with the state, it must first develop a base or core of disciples. The disciples put all of their faith in the ability of the leader.

To determine the importance of charisma in the Al-Qaeda case study, it is necessary first to identify what charismatic qualities Zarqawi demonstrated, how he leveraged those characteristics to develop a tightly networked and cohesive terrorist organization, and how he transitioned through multiple phases to meet the organization's needs.

To attain his goals of a caliphate and the implementation of Islamic sharia law, Zarqawi had to develop a revolutionary core group of disciples. He had to gain sufficient strength in numbers that would enable him to overtly attack the enemy (in this case, the West), the apostate regime of Jordan, other secular Arab nations in the region, the Zionist state of Israel, and the Shi'a Muslim population. To inspire this core of devoted followers, Zarqawi had to convince them he was providing the leadership required to overcome a "situation of intense social crisis."[5] By leveraging his previous experiences,

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[5] Michael Freeman and Gordon McCormick, *Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Groups: A Strategic Assessment*, ed. unpublished.

imprisonment in Jordan, and combat experience in Afghanistan, Zarqawi presented an initially inspirational and charismatic personality that offered a solution to the social crisis at hand, the invasion of U.S. forces.

One of the defining characteristics of charismatic influence is the ability to encourage individuals to participate in a collective action that requires personal sacrifice and places the individual in danger. Indeed, the ability to get others to put themselves in grave danger for what is presented as the "greater good" and to act "less than individually rational" is close to a definition of what charismatic leadership amounts to.[6] To experience success as he did in organizing several fundamentally different organizations, Zarqawi had to not only leverage all the charismatic variables described in Freeman and McCormick's model, but also provide an *ideology* that justified the group's radical position.

2. Ideology

Ideology is another component of the inspirational variable. To explain it, Freeman and McCormick address four questions associated with ideology: What is the problem? Who is the enemy? What is the solution? What are the means?

In determining the answers to these questions, the basic framework of most ideologies is revealed. A leader that can convince a group of followers to agree that they face a problem and can establish the source of the problem has, in effect, the initial ingredients for inculcating an ideology. Once a leader generates enough interest and support for an issue and encourages his followers to agree

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[6] Michael Freeman and Gordon McCormick, *Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Groups: A Strategic Assessment*, ed. unpublished.

on the source of the problem, he can then determine how to legitimately resolve it. Once the problem, the source, and the potential solution are determined, the organization can then define what methods will be most legitimate. In most cases such as those of Zarqawi, the solution is to attack, either directly or indirectly, the source of the problem.

C.   OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP VARIABLE

In the Freeman-McCormick model, the operational leadership variable is composed of three components, strategy, tactics and organizational factors; each is discussed in detail below.

As with the inspirational leadership variable, if the ability to make good operational decisions is vested in a single person with the requisite skills, and there is no apparent successor with similar operational experience, the expectation is that with the killing or capture of the leader, the organization will lose or have a diminished operational capacity.

1.   The Strategic Factor

A strategy is the conceptual framework that guides an organization's operations. In the case of Zarqawi, the strategic choices involved were the decisions to use violence over politics, identifying the near enemy rather than the far enemy, the decision to instigate civil war between the Sunni and Shia, as well as the decision to attack civilians.

2.   The Tactical Factor

Tactically, the operational leader decides what is attacked, when, and how. Part of Zarqawi's strategy in Iraq was to foment civil war. The strategic decision to engage in civil war had to be operationalized. For example,

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Zarqawi used the attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra to instigate sectarian violence and to foment civil war. The tactical considerations involved Zarqawi determining the target (the Golden Mosque), the timing (when probability of success is highest) and the method (suicide bomber) that he believed would ultimately facilitate, or instigate, a Sunni-Shia civil war.

An operational leader is the one who decides *when* to attack. At times, this is of particular importance at the tactical level. Thus, for example, Zarqawi eroded the security around Baghdad by repeatedly attacking civilian targets with suicide bombings. The exact timing of these attacks was critical only when attacks were coordinated to occur simultaneously to increase their dramatic effect. Also important in timing, the Madrid bombings in 2004, planned for the eve of a strategically important Spanish presidential election, were intended to influence voters. In this regard, they were highly successful, ultimately resulting in Spain withdrawing from the U.S. coalition in Iraq.[7]

Finally, leaders determine the methods to be used. They have a range of options to choose from: assassinations, car bombs, suicide bombs, airplane hijackings, hostage-taking, weapons of mass destruction, etc. As with the choice of targets, the operational leader must choose which tactic has the best chance of success at the lowest cost. The selection of a particular method may serve various purposes. For example, Zarqawi used kidnappings and beheadings in Iraq to erode the political

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[7] Michael Freeman and Gordon McCormick, *Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Groups: A Strategic Assessment*, ed. unpublished.

and public will in support of the coalition. An effective operational leader will take into account the potential secondary effects of each of these choices by considering how his supporters, opponents, and neutral observers will view the legitimacy of these actions.

When an organization is explicitly dependent on the leader for all these aspects – selection of targets, tactics used, and timing – Freeman and McCormick theorize that the organization is thereby highly vulnerable to the use of a decapitation strategy.

3.   The Organizational Factors

An organization's ultimate success is inherently dependent on the leader's ability to provide resources to the group. Some of the resources critical to a terrorist organization are logistical resources. However, perhaps even more important, are the personal ties established by the leader. If he has a well-developed network of associates that he can leverage through personal ties, a leader can provide required financial support, acquire new recruits, and arrange the underground transportation of individuals. Thus, the establishment of a sufficient support network is critical to the success of the organization and essential for the group's growth in size and capacity.

In addition to those logistical and personal resources, a leader must also possess the organizational skills necessary for effectively managing an evolving group of individuals. As long as the group remains relatively small, the leader can directly supervise all aspects of the organization. But as the organization grows in size and capacity, its complexity also expands relative to its size.

And as the organization becomes more complex, its success becomes more and more dependent on the leader's ability to develop an appropriate and effective organizational structure.

D.   CONCEPTUAL MODEL

To illustrate the relationship between the inspirational and the operational variables, Freeman and McCormick developed the graphic model shown in Figure 1. The model is a two-dimensional representation. On the Y-axis is the inspirational leadership; on the X-axis the operational leadership.

The Value of Individual Leaders

Inspirational

II   I

Resurgent Leader
Declining Leader

IV   III

Operational
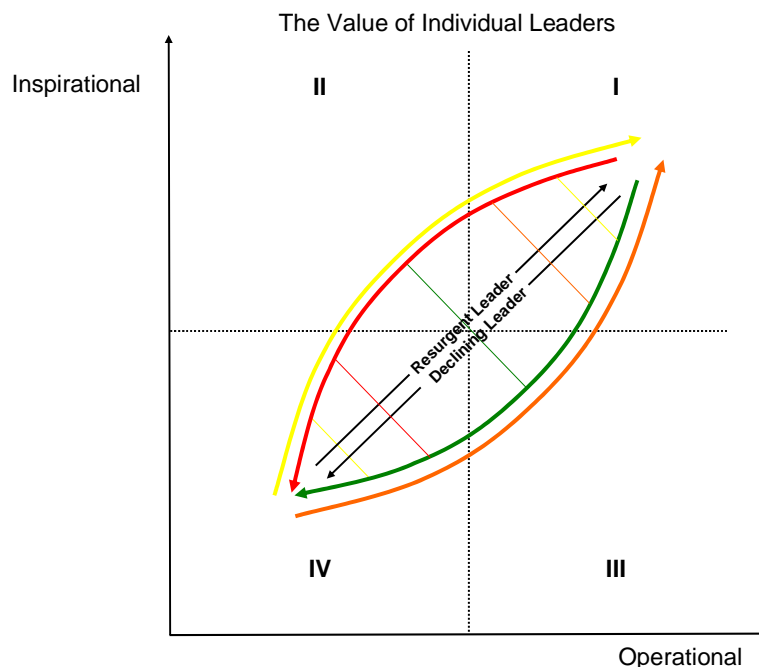
Figure 1.   Freeman and McCormick Leadership Model
(From: Freeman and McCormick, Leadership Targeting of
Terrorist Groups: A Strategic Assessment)

As described above, both variables are composed of several factors. In the illustration, the sub-components of each variable have been combined for visual simplicity. Thus the Y-axis shows inspirational leadership's two sub-

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components: charisma and ideology. On the X-axis is the operational component, which comprises control over the organization's strategy, tactics, and organizational design.

The dotted lines in the figure divide the model into four quadrants, each of which characterizes a leadership type. The upper right quadrant (quadrant I) depicts a leader who is critical both inspirationally and operationally to the organization. The upper left quadrant (quadrant II) depicts a leader who has a lesser role in controlling operations, but who nonetheless remains significant in fulfilling the inspirational aspect of leadership. The lower right corner of the figure (quadrant III) shows a leader who is lacking in the inspirational aspect, but who remains operationally critical to the organization. The final quadrant (quadrant IV) reveals a leader who is not necessary for the organizations fails operations or inspiration.

According to Freeman and McCormick, most leaders undergo a transition from quadrant I to quadrant IV as he institutionalizes both the operational and inspirational leadership. The model also visualizes a leader who has moved into quadrant IV but who, for whatever reason, sees a necessity to re-establish himself within the organization. Although Freeman and McCormick expect the declining leader to be the norm, they also address the leader that moves from quadrant IV back toward quadrant I, and is called a resurgent leader.

In sum, the Freeman and McCormick model is helpful in visualizing the concepts and factors of the two variables described earlier in this chapter. The descriptions

presented do not cover every scenario, nor will every leader fall into one of the four quadrants or follow one of the described routes. Nevertheless, Freeman and McCormick argue that a majority of cases will fit the model effectively. The model has proved useful for visualizing the important vulnerabilities of organizations.

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III. A CHRONOLOGY OF ATTACKS AND TRENDS

A.   ABU MUSAB AL-ZARQAWI BACKGROUND

This presentation of the Zarqawi case study will begin with a timeline and chronology of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's life and activities. This chapter comprises a reconstruction of events from his childhood lifestyle through his incarceration in prison to his death in Iraq. This brief outline of his life was constructed from several sources in order to provide the reader with a background and understanding of the evolution of Zarqawi. In the few instances where the sources do not agree about dates or names, an attempt has been made to provide a plausible interpretation based on the veracity of the reporting. In the few cases where contradictions exist, both versions are presented.

1.   Chronology of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, one of the most-wanted terrorists following the events of 11 September, was born Ahmed Fadhil al-Khalayleh in the Jordanian town of Al-Zarqah in October of 1966.[8] In his youth, Zarqawi was a street thug in Zarqa, Jordan, where both unemployment and desperation were high. The city was overrun with Palestinian refugees, which contributed to the poor economic situation in much of Jordan outside of the capitol of Amman. Government social programs and public services were not sufficient for dealing with the high unemployment,

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[8] Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi, http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2006/06/iraq-060609-rferl01.htm (accessed September 2007); Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "Who is Abu Zarqawi?" *The Weekly Standard* 9, no. 35 (May 24, 2004), 25, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=638890891&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD.

and Zarqawi blamed the Jordanian monarchy for the social and political problems of its citizens. Though, initially, he had blamed the Palestinian refugee population for his own poor socio-economic situation,[9] he later sympathized with them, and began to blame the regime for their problems in Jordan. Zarqawi became convinced that the King of Jordan had betrayed the Palestinians by recognizing and negotiating with the Israeli state.[10]

As a result of these new sympathies, Zarqawi soon found himself running in the same social circles as Palestinian youths, attending religious sermons in Zarqa's Palestinian areas, and being influenced by their Islamist message. As Napoleoni describes them, the mosques in Zarqa at the time were "the core of sociopolitical identity where people meet to discuss their bleak destiny."[11] Zarqawi became more and more committed to this group of Islamists and was soon indoctrinated into the Islamist movement. Thus, it was through these social contacts that Zarqawi found his way into the Islamists' camp. As Marc Sageman shows, in *Understanding Terrorist Networks,* it is through social contacts that individuals are most likely to become involved in organizations.[12] Corina Johnson makes a similar argument in her article, "Roots of Terror," where she

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[9] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

[10] Brisard, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda.*

[11] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

[12] Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 220.

concludes, "Personal connections are of ultimate importance in recruitment regardless of region or ideology."[13]

Zarqawi spent most of his youth in that impoverished village and eventually dropped out of school. In his early teens he joined a gang, became involved with drugs, and was accused of sexual assault, arrested, and later sent to prison.[14] After spending a brief period in prison, Zarqawi left Jordan and traveled to Afghanistan to participate in the anti-Soviet jihad. Unfortunately, Zarqawi did not arrive in Afghanistan until after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, which proved to be a bitter disappointment for him.[15]

Zarqawi spent the next several years in Afghanistan, where he received militant training and participated in the factional fighting taking place between various Afghan warlords at that time. In 1993, Zarqawi returned to Jordan and soon was imprisoned once again for conspiring to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy.[16] One of the first groups with which Zarqawi was associated was the Islamist Bayt al-Imam, an association and participation that drew the attention of the Jordanian Intelligence Directorate (GID).

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[13] Corina Johnson, "Roots of Terror" (Women in International Security Georgetown University Center for Peace & Security Studies Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Strategic Studies Institute, 12 Feb 2007) (accessed September 2007).

[14] Loretta Napoleoni, "Profile of a Killer," *Foreign Policy*, no. 151 (Nov-Dec 2005), 37-43.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi, http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2006/06/iraq-060609-rferl01.htm (accessed September 2007); Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "Who is Abu Zarqawi?" *The Weekly Standard* 9, no. 35 (May 24, 2004), 25, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=638890891&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD.

When Jordanian security forces broke up the outlawed group, Zarqawi was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for his participation.[17]

It is unclear whether Zarqawi returned to Jordan after meeting the influential cleric, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, as Napoleoni says, or whether he met Maqdisi while imprisoned for his Islamist activities as described by Gunaratana. In either case, Zarqawi became very close to Maqdisi during their many years together in prison, and at some point Maqdisi became his principle spiritual and ideological inspiration. While in prison, Zarqawi spent several hours each day studying and memorizing chapters of the Qur'an, and was described later as a very well educated student.[18] Hamdi Murad, a former spiritual leader and now professor of Islamic studies in Al-Balqa, Jordan, describes Zarqawi during his prison years as "a very simple person, normal, looking for truth in his own way."[19]

It was through Zarqawi's relationship with Maqdisi that Zarqawi became radicalized and first became familiar with Usama Bin Laden. Maqdisi was a contemporary and close friend of Abu Qatada, the spiritual leader of Al Qaeda;[20] it is possible that Zarqawi was able to establish a meeting with bin Laden through Maqdisi's personal ties with Abu

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[17] *Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi.*

[18] Michael Radu, "E-Notes: The Demise of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi - FPRI," http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20060608.americawar.radu.al-zarqawi.html (accessed September 2007).

[19] Loretta Napoleoni, "Profile of a Killer," *Foreign Policy*, no. 151 (Nov-Dec 2005), 37-43.

[20] Rohan Gunaratana, "Abu Musab Zarqawi: A New Generation Terrorist Leader," *Instituite of Defense and Strategic Studies* (2006), http://www.ntu.edu.sg/rsis/publications/Perspective/IDSS252004.pdf (accessed February 2007).

Qatada. Zarqawi quickly grasped the unique role personal physical interaction can play – at mosques, in prison, through political organizations or charities. Such associations were to become the backbone of Zarqawi's recruiting and logistics network.

In the spring of 1999 Zarqawi was released from prison under the national amnesty granted by King Abdullah after he took office.[21] Shortly thereafter Zarqawi left Jordan and went to Peshawar, Pakistan, where he is said to have joined up with al Qaeda.[22] It is unknown whether Zarqawi actually joined the al-Qaeda organization, or whether he only associated with members of al-Qaeda through several weak and informal ties.

Zarqawi then returned to Afghanistan, where he set up a camp (which reportedly specialized in manufacturing poisons) near the western Afghan city of Herat. Zarqawi also began to develop relationships in the area and eventually established a very well developed network.[23] Zarqawi also gradually created a network of cells in Iran and in the northern Kurdish areas of Iraq through his contacts in the Islamic movement of Kurdistan and Ansar Al Islam.[24] It was in early 2000 that Zarqawi reportedly met

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[21] Rohan Gunaratana, "Abu Musab Zarqawi: A New Generation Terrorist Leader," *Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies* (2006), http://www.ntu.edu.sg/rsis/publications/Perspective/IDSS252004.pdf (accessed February 2007).See also Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

[22] *Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi.*

[23] Leiken and Brooke, *Who is Abu Zarqawi?* 25; Global security org, profile, "Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/abu_musab_al-zarqawi.htm (accessed 9/18/2007, 2007).

[24] Gunaratana, *Abu Musab Zarqawi: A New Generation Terrorist Leader.*

with Usama Bin Laden near Khandahar.[25] Zarqawi began running operations in this area that were complimentary to those of al Qaeda, an association that has caused many to conclude that Zarqawi conspired with and was partly responsible for the al Qaeda millennium plots to blow up the Radisson Hotel in Amman, Jordan.[26] In November 2001, a Joint U.S.-Jordanian investigation accused Zarqawi of being part of the foiled Al-Qaeda plot.[27]

By the summer of 2001 Zarqawi had taken control of several groups operating throughout Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan. He also provided both logistical support and military training to numerous individuals and groups. It was through those relationships that Zarqawi became familiar with the local Kurdish Islamist group, Ansar al Islam.[28]

After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, it is believed that Zarqawi left the country and relocated to northern Iran and the border area between Iran and Iraq. The ties he established while running the training camps in Herat eventually facilitated this relocation from Herat to northern Iraq. There are several possible explanations why Zarqawi moved from Herat to northern Iraq. First, as noted above, Zarqawi had established weak ties to the area through the relationships he established while running the

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[25] Loretta Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq : Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 1st North American ed. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 281, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0517/2005022959.html.

[26] Bruce Riedel, "Al Qaeda Strikes Back," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 3 (May/Jun, 2007), 24, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1275815491&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD.

[27] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

[28] Gunaratana, *Abu Musab Zarqawi: A New Generation Terrorist Leader*.

training camps in Herat. And because of those ties, it is reasonable to suspect Zarqawi selected the area because of the relative security it provided. Others suggest that Zarqawi may have anticipated the U.S. invasion and therefore positioned himself in the area to take advantage of the situation. In any case, it is certain that after the fall of the Taliban, Zarqawi fled to the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq and immediately began to establish more training camps.[29]

According to the Web site, globalsecurity.org, Kurdish militants associated with Zarqawi built training camps for making explosives and poisons in northern Iraq. It is also said that associates and possibly Zarqawi himself were running the camps as they prepared for what appeared to be an impending invasion by U.S. forces.[30] Napoleoni says that in the summer of 2002 Zarqawi went secretly to Baghdad in order to make preparations for battle. Reports of Zarqawi's presence in Baghdad pressured analysts to draw a direct line between Zarqawi, al-Qaeda, and the Saddam regime, information that may have contributed to the decision to invade Iraq.

By February 2002, the Jordanians had convicted Zarqawi in absentia for his role in the millennium attacks and in the assassination of Yizahk Snir. Following his conviction, Zarqawi was sentenced in absentia to life in prison.[31]

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[29] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

[30] Global security org, profile, *Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.*

[31] Leiken and Brooke, *Who is Abu Zarqawi?* 25.

In late October of 2002, Ambassador Laurence Foley, from the U.S. Agency for International Development, was assassinated in Amman, Jordan. Numerous sources implicated Zarqawi and his network in this attack.[32]

In February 2003, Colin Powell addressed the UN Security Council and named Zarqawi as an associate of al-Qaeda leader Usama bin Laden. Powell's speech put Zarqawi's name in the spotlight for the first time and indicated that Zarqawi was the leader of an al Qaeda cell operating in Iraq with the implicit consent of the Iraqi regime.[33]

Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Zarqawi remained relatively elusive and quiet. The record shows that even though Zarqawi was preparing for battle against the United States, he avoided contact with coalition forces during the first several months of the occupation. This all changed in August 2003.

At that time, Zarqawi was implicated in several high-profile attacks. The first occurred on 19 August 2003 when a truck bomb exploded at the UN headquarters in Baghdad, which killed twenty-three people, including the top UN envoy, Sergio Vieira de Mello. As a result of this attack, the UN withdrew from Iraq.[34] Later that same month, a car full of explosives was driven into the Imam Ali mosque in

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[32] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43; Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24.

[33] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

[34] Adam Fresco, "Briefing: Al-Zarqawi's Toll of Atrocities - Times Online," Times online, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/iraq/article672808.ece (accessed September 2007).

Najaf,[35] killing more than eighty people, including a leading Shi'ite cleric, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, the leader of the hard-line Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.[36] This attack on a Shi'ite holy site was Zarqawi's first attempt at inciting sectarian violence. Zarqawi is also implicated in the truck bombing that month of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad.[37]

In late 2003, coordinated blasts from suicide car bombs, mortars, and planted explosives struck Shi'ite Muslim shrines in Karbala and Baghdad, killing at least 181. U.S. authorities linked these attacks to Zarqawi and his network of operatives.[38] In March 2004, several bombs rocked the Madrid train station killing a number of civilians. Zarqawi claimed responsibility, blaming the attack on Spain's cooperation with U.S. forces in Iraq. The attack on the Madrid train station ultimately resulted in the withdrawal of Spanish forces from Iraq and facilitated a change in political parties within the Spanish government. Even though Zarqawi claimed responsibility for this attack it appears a group loosely associated with al Qaeda actually planned and executed the attack according to the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base.

In early April Jordanian intelligence uncovered a plot by Zarqawi to strike the headquarters of the General Intelligence Department in Amman with a chemical bomb. The

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[35] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

[36] Fresco, *Briefing: Al-Zarqawi's Toll of Atrocities - Times Online*; Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24.

[37] Leiken and Brooke, *Who is Abu Zarqawi?* 25.

[38] Fresco, *Briefing: Al-Zarqawi's Toll of Atrocities - Times Online*; Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24; Leiken and Brooke, *Who is Abu Zarqawi?* 25.

GID (Jordanian Intelligence) seized several trucks loaded with over twenty tons of chemical explosives.[39] Even though the operation was unsuccessful, it suggested a change in Zarqawi's strategy. Not only was Zarqawi inciting civil war in Iraq by attacking Shi'ite religious sites, conducting spectacular attacks on key infrastructure, and taking hostages, he was also demonstrating his willingness to expand the Jihad from Iraq to a more regional Jihad in an effort to effect the removal of what he perceived as apostate governments, establish sharia law, and develop a regional caliphate.[40]

Throughout 2004 and 2005, Zarqawi and his group carried out brazen bombings, beheadings and other attacks. In April, Zarqawi kidnapped and beheaded an American citizen Nicholas Berg, in what was to be the first of several brutal executions. However, Zarqawi also faced several new challenges. Though many Sunni insurgents and foreigners in Zarqawi's ranks were willing to conduct brutal attacks on the civilian population, a growing majority of Iraqis began to express anger at Zarqawi's tactics. In a letter later discovered by U.S. forces, reported by Napoleoni, Zarqawi wrote to Usama bin Laden stating his belief that he had two options. Either he could stay in Iraq and continue the aggressive attack on Shi'ites, the coalition, and Iraqis who opposed his methods, or he could leave Iraq and move to a new location to wage Jihad against the near enemy from there.[41]

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[39] Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24.

[40] *Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi.*

[41] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

Throughout the summer of 2004, the targets that Zarqawi and his organization chose to attack all seemed to be people and things that symbolized stability and political progress. They used a car bomb to assassinate Abdel-Zahraa Othman, the president of the Iraqi governing council, while simultaneously targeting both military and police recruiting stations, busy markets, and police checkpoints throughout the city of Baghdad.[42] The relentless attacks on political symbols, civil services, and government officials continued throughout the summer. Zarqawi's intent was apparently to create as much panic and distrust in the local population as possible, so they would lose trust in the government and its ability to protect the people. Ultimately, he would use more coercive techniques to manipulate Sunni organizations into attacking his religious opponents.

Zarqawi's brutal kidnappings and beheadings continued through September and October, as he claimed responsibility for the kidnapping and beheading of three engineers – Jack Hensley, Jack Armstrong, and Kenneth Bigley – from the United States and the United Kingdom. By October, all were confirmed to have been beheaded by Zarqawi. Later that month another kidnap victim, Shosei Koda, 24, of Japan, was also found decapitated in Baghdad, and again Zarqawi and his group claimed responsibility.[43]

In the fall of 2004, Zarqawi communicated with bin Laden and pledged his group's allegiance.[44] But that pledge did not reflect Zarqawi's acceptance of the al Qaeda

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[42] Fresco, *Briefing: Al-Zarqawi's Toll of Atrocities - Times Online.*

[43] Ibid.

[44] Global security org, profile, *Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.*

ideology or the strategy of attacking only the far enemy. Zarqawi was relentless in his attacks on the Shi'ite population as he continued in his efforts to provoke civil war. Zarqawi's primary targets were Iraqi Shi'ites. He would commit to attacking the far enemy only when convenient targets of opportunity presented themselves, thus fulfilling his obligations to the greater al Qaeda.

The brutal attacks organized by Zarqawi and his network continued in December with the bombings of Shi'ite shrines in Najaf and Karbala.[45] Characteristically, he pursued operations that were spectacular in mass and symbolism. Attacks on a funeral procession in Najaf and the main bus station in nearby Karbala killed at least sixty people in the Shi'ite holy cities. The attacks, which struck the center of the Shi'ite religious institutions in Iraq were, from a military perspective, strikes at the heart of the enemy. This kind of attack occurred over and over, with Zarqawi directing attacks that were spectacular in effect and resulted in heavy media coverage.

By December, in a letter posted on the Internet, Usama bin Laden had embraced Zarqawi's activities. "Let it be known, the brother mujahid AMZ is the emir of the AQ organization in the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates and the brother of the group in the country should swear to him an oath of obedience."[46] With parliamentary elections scheduled for January 2005, Zarqawi called on Iraqis not to participate, referring to the elections as illegitimate and supported only by apostates. But his calls were largely

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[45] Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24.

[46] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

ignored, as large numbers of Iraqis turned out to vote in neighborhoods and cities all over the country.

Zarqawi continued his campaign of terror, intimidation, and coercion into 2005. In February, a suicide car-bomber struck a crowd of Iraqi police and National Guard recruits in the southern city of Hillah, killing 125.[47] Zarqawi and his associates not only continued targeting Shi'ites, but also announced that they would target any Sunnis who cooperated with the Iraqi government or supported the country's constitution.[48]

In October, U.S. authorities released a letter allegedly written by al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri, to Zarqawi. In it, Zawahri urges Zarqawi to stop killing ordinary Muslims,[49] chastises him for his tactics, and encourages him to be more conscious of the targets he selects and the methods he uses. He appears to be concerned that Zarqawi might be alienating his base of support among the moderate Sunni tribes of Iraq and negatively influencing the base of support that al-Qaeda draws on.[50]

On 9 November 2005, three hotels in the Jordanian capital of Amman were bombed simultaneously, and when Zarqawi claimed responsibility, he was immediately criticized throughout the Arab world in a backlash of

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[47] Fresco, *Briefing: Al-Zarqawi's Toll of Atrocities - Times Online.*

[48] *Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi.*

[49] Ibid.

[50] Brian Fishman, "After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Autumn, 2006), 19, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1160954331&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT= 309&VName=PQD.

revulsion.[51] The attack was widely derided in Jordan, especially after the revelation that one of the bombs had detonated amid and killed several Muslims attending a wedding reception.[52] Some months after the Jordan hotel attacks, reports indicate that several Sunni insurgent groups agreed to reconcile with the Iraqi government. This rift among Zarqawi's former allies may indicate that his tactics were causing some of the insurgents to turn against him and his network.

In the most spectacular attack since the 2003 UN headquarters bombing, on February 22, 2006 Zarqawi's group attacked the Golden Mosque in Samara, considered one of the most sacred Shi'ite holy sites in Iraq.[53] As a target, the mosque was significant because it led to an immediate upsurge in sectarian violence that pushed the entire country to the brink of civil war; the attack was followed by several months of revenge killings throughout Iraq.[54]

Finally, on 7 June 2006, U.S. aircraft killed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, and at least six others, including Abu Abdul-Rahman, who had been al-Zarqawi's spiritual leader.

In sum, many factors are involved in Zarqawi's journey toward becoming a feared terrorist in the post-9/11 era. The social crisis that believed he had suffered through

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[51] *Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi.*

[52] Fishman, *After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 19.

[53] Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24.

[54] *Iraq: A Timeline of Abu Mus'Ab Al-Zarqawi.*

ultimately facilitated his radicalization. And with his indoctrination into the radical Islamist community, Zarqawi's future was set.

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IV. PHASE I: FROM ADOLESCENCE TO AFGHANISTAN: ZARQAWI'S EARLY EXPERIENCE AND EVENTUAL RADICALIZATION

A.   ADOLESCENCE TO AFGHANISTAN

This chapter covers a broad time span: Zarqawi's youth, his early life in Jordan, his experiences in Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet jihad, his association and involvement with the radical Islamist group Tawhid, or Bayaat al Imam, his incarceration and subsequent radicalization in the al Suwaqah prison in Jordan, and his return to Afghanistan after his release. The section addresses some personal social issues that may have contributed to Zarqawi's radicalization and the greater social issues surrounding the Palestinian issue and how they may have been incorporated into his ideological belief system.

1.   Inspirational

During this lengthy phase of Zarqawi's life, there are indications that the inspirational variable was the single most significant factor at this time. It is during this phase that Zarqawi identifies with the Islamist movement and begins his radicalization; Zarqawi also becomes a member of the Salafi Islamist movement but is not a leader in the organization at this point. This phase establishes the inspirational foundation Zarqawi will rely upon in future phases.

a.   *Ideology*

In analyzing Zarqawi's ideology, several questions must be answered in regard to Zarqawi's ideological goals. For example, to what extent was Zarqawi *solely* responsible for describing the problems at hand, for

identifying the enemy, determining solutions, and dictating the means to address the issues? These questions are critical because, as we explained in Chapter II, the more a leader – in this case, Zarqawi – is solely responsible for these aspects (the variables), the higher his position on the inspirational axis.

As we will show later, Zarqawi had a close relationship with Maqdisi. This suggests that other Islamist authors may have been the source of Zarqawi's ideology rather than establishing his own ideology based solely on his own personal beliefs. Due to Zarqawi's own lack of religious authority, his credibility among jihadists was relatively insignificant. And, because of his own lack of credibility, Zarqawi apparently leveraged Maqdisi's credibility to gain support for his own jihadist ideology and subsequent justification for his violent terrorist strategy. As we will see, Zarqawi later drifted away from Maqdisi; as he did, he began to instigate subtle changes to the general jihadist ideology that legitimized his strategies. This shift in the overall control of ideology may have resulted in an increase in Zarqawi's ideological centrality. During this phase, however, there is little evidence that Zarqawi was solely or even mainly responsible for the ideology driving the current Islamist movement. It was Maqdisi, as well as other Salafi authors, who were the inspiration and ideological source for Zarqawi.

Zarqawi perceived the immediate problem encompassed a number of prevailing issues. First and foremost were the factors involved in the secular Jordanian monarchy's repression of Islamists. Underlying and

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complicating the general feeling of repression were the social issues concerning the large and increasing Palestinian population, and an inherent sense of despair within Zarqawi himself.[55] In her book, *Insurgent Iraq*, Napoleoni characterizes Zarqawi's immediate cause as "deliverance of Muslims from the humiliation of occupation."[56] The root cause he embraced, however, was the culmination of numerous factors and evolved over time. Each factor was essential and contributed to Zarqawi's perception of underlying problems. Some of the factors involved were the "repression of Palestinians by King Hussein of Jordan," the repression of the Islamist movement by secular Western governments, globalization, and a shift away from religion as the dominant form of governing.[57]

At the root of the problem was Zarqawi's conviction that the regime mostly benefited the monarchy, ignoring the needs of ordinary citizens. He disagreed with the Jordanian government's pluralism and lack of religious doctrine in the governing of its citizens. Zarqawi was left wanting a more righteous, religious form of government that would support all Arabs and Muslims.

But those perceptions were not unique to Zarqawi; a large Salafist population had identified the same problematic issues. Because it was a shared, widespread

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[55] Brisard, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda*; Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

[56] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

[57] Jean-Charles Brisard, *Zarqawi : The New Face of Al-Qaeda*, 2005), http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip059/2005006964.html.

identification of the problem, Zarqawi is not considered a central figure in defining the issues confronted by the Islamist movement.

For Zarqawi, the enemy was the Jordanian monarchy, and to a lesser extent, the West. This identification of the enemy was not unique to Zarqawi. The Salafi ideology also identifies apostate secular governments and the West as the enemy.[58] Thus, Zarqawi was not a driving force in his identification of the enemy, for it was a common and unifying identification in Salafi ideology.

To Zarqawi, the solution to the perceived problem of apostate or infidel regimes was simple. He adopted the position taken by both Sayyed Qutb and Zawahiri, as cited by Napoleoni. The solution to any government being accused of apostasy through the principle of "taqfir" was to make it the target of "revolutionary Jihad."[59] Because Salafi jihadists believe that some Arab and Islamic governments are guilty of apostasy for their collusion with Christian and Jewish governments, they perceive them as legitimate targets.[60] Thus, Zarqawi applied the same principle and determined that armed revolutionary jihad against the Jordanian monarchy was a justifiable solution. It would free the Palestinians and Jordanian citizens from socio-political repression and allow them to strike back at the Zionist Jewish "crusaders."

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[58] US Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, *Militant Ideology Atlas* [November 2006]).

[59] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

[60] US Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center, *Militant Ideology Atlas* [November 2006]).

In sum, therefore, in regard to this variable, we assess Zarqawi as having a low ideological centrality. Indeed, Fishman claims that Zarqawi's ideological influence was actually insignificant; his greatest strength was his personal leadership skills.[61]

b. Charisma

The second factor used to determine Zarqawi's leadership strength in terms of the inspirational variable is his charismatic value. Studies show that throughout his youth and his experience in Afghanistan he apparently had a significantly low level of charisma. As a street thug and petty criminal in Jordan, Zarqawi demonstrated little leadership talent. We attribute this lacking to the fact that at this point he had no deep-seated ideological convictions, no common cause with the radical Islamic movement, and thus no possible leadership motivations or positions.

However, after Zarqawi was imprisoned with Maqdisi for their illegal Islamist activity, there was an observable change in Zarqawi's personality and early signs of a budding charisma. And as Brian Fishman notes, his adoption of a "Gharib" identity bolstered those developing charismatic qualities.[62]

Zarqawi's transformation, which was physical as well as emotional and spiritual, occurred during his term in prison. During long periods of isolation Zarqawi physically transformed himself by strengthening his body,

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[61] Fishman, *After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 19.

[62] The term "Gharib" loosely translates to "stranger". Zarqawi's long-standing nickname was "al-Gharib" and is considered a common nickname among Jihadists.

which facilitated his change in character as well. As he became more physically dominating, he began to challenge the guards and often defended other inmates from their brutal practices. Napoleoni describes how Zarqawi would deliberately commit acts of noncompliance and thus willingly expose himself to the guards' retribution so as to develop a reputation among the inmates.[63] In her book Napoleoni cites many inmates' descriptions evidencing Zarqawi's acquiring of a devoted following of Jihadists in the prison, a transforming process that established him there at least as a leader.

Through his prison experience, Zarqawi was transformed physically, mentally, and spiritually; it also nurtured a growing ability to influence and lead other jihadists. We assess Zarqawi's overall charismatic strength as moderate to high based on the evidence that Zarqawi was able to influence other Islamists, both inside and outside the prison environment.

2. Operational

During the early stages of this phase, Zarqawi was operationally irrelevant. By the later stages, however, he was able to establish more operational control and increased his relevance with the young Islamist group he and Maqdisi had formed.

There is some evidence that suggests that throughout this period Zarqawi grew in importance as a leader.[64] According to those accounts, Zarqawi first established himself as a leader after his departure from Jordan during his early experiences and contacts in Afghanistan. And,

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[63] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

[64] Ibid.

they argue, after he met and established a relationship with Maqdisi, his abilities to lead gained the momentum that was to make him a vital Islamist leader.

During Zarqawi and Maqdisi's imprisonment for their involvement in an outlawed Islamist organization, Zarqawi immersed himself in the teachings of the Qur'an and Salafi ideology. Maqdisi took a back seat to Zarqawi and encouraged other political prisoners to follow Zarqawi's lead, eventually establishing Zarqawi as the "emir" within Suwaqah prison.[65] As Zarqawi developed an educated understanding of the Salafi ideology he became more respected. The respect that Zarqawi earned led to his status as an emir within the prison and ultimately resulted in the establishing the foundation of his own small group.

a. Strategic

Napoleoni describes the transition of leadership that took place from Maqdisi to his protégé Zarqawi during their incarceration. Zarqawi was encouraged by Maqdisi to take on the leadership responsibilities of the Islamists, but in accepting that responsibility, he simply adopted the strategy of the previous leaders. He made no changes in the revolutionary strategy and continued to follow the same strategic vision as previous revolutionaries: violence and terrorism directed at "near" enemies. At the time, Zarqawi simply did not have a broad enough following with subordinate organizations to be able to dictate strategy. His development of strategic shifts in methods would come later in his evolution as a group leader.

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[65] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

b. Tactical

For our purposes, it is critical to determine the level of direct tactical control that was demonstrated by Zarqawi and when that control was evidenced. It is not until the later stages of this phase, in his direction of a small group of Islamists as they planned attacks in Jordan, that Zarqawi eventually demonstrated some unilateral tactical control.

c. Organizational

Both Zarqawi and Maqdisi used their positions within the prison to encourage prisoners to join their organization and thus built up the membership. As Zarqawi was thrust into the leadership role, Maqdisi became his spiritual advisor. One inmate explains, "They rejected the command of Abu Muhammed al-Maqdisi, preferring Abu Musab al Zarqawi because of his strength and determination."[66] As time went by, Zarqawi continued to grow in his role of emir. One inmate interviewed by Fouad Hussein states, "Al-Zarqawi's emirate was among the strongest and most influential with those groups for organizational reasons, because it extended to all prison quarters and attracted a large number of inmates."[67]

What seems certain, therefore, is that Zarqawi experienced success in prison in recruiting, influencing, and leading prisoners. The development of these organizational skills, which established him as a leader, eventually also provided him with the means to leverage his release from prison. A significant number of the inmates

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[66] Zarkaoui, Barrat, Rizk, and Stephan, op.cit.

[67] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 281.

influenced by Zarqawi in prison later formed the core group of his Tawhid organization and thus joined in his fight against the Jordanian regime.

In sum, through the relationships forged in Afghanistan and in Suwaqah prison, Zarqawi established the close ties that he would rely on throughout his career. He gradually became known as a skilled leader and organizational mastermind, and was able to establish close ties to other influential Islamists largely due to three factors. First, his close relationship with Maqdisi helped establish his credibility. Second, the leadership he displayed in prison became legendary, which in turn established his credibility after his release from prison. Finally, Zarqawi's reputation as a devout Islamist and his willingness to suffer on behalf of his "Muslim brothers" encouraged recruits to the organization.

During his initial time in Afghanistan and subsequent imprisonment in Jordan, Zarqawi learned the importance of establishing key relationships. He leveraged the reputation of several well-known Islamists and used those ties to give legitimacy to his own credentials. As a result, a number of his fellow jihadists were attracted to Zarqawi, and he was able to form loose networks of individuals that he would rely on upon his return to Afghanistan after his release from prison.

In light of the overall evidence and anecdotal accounts, therefore, it is plausible to assess Zarqawi's organizational prowess as significant and of a kind that would ultimately contribute greatly to his future success. Although it is difficult to measure and quantify this characteristic's overall contribution to Zarqawi's

leadership skills in terms of the operational variable, it is obvious that his organizational prowess did translate into a significant level of operational importance.

B.   PHASE 1 ASSESSMENT

Based on the analysis of Zarqawi's leadership qualities during Phase I, Zarqawi scores a "2" in both the composite operational variable as well as in the composite inspirational variable. Figure 2 represents the overall assessment of both variables based on the composite assessment of the sub-variables. This phase establishes the foundation of Zarqawi's future organizations, however, during this phase Zarqawi is simply an individual in a much larger Salafi Jihadist movement. Zarqawi is not personalizing the ideology nor is he able to directly control strategic choices for the greater Salafi movement. It is the lack of influence, ideologically, and the insignificant operational leadership that limit Zarqawi's influence in this phase. In addition to Zarqawi's lack of influence throughout this period, Zarqawi also lacks personal uniqueness. Zarqawi is not critical to the continued virility of the Salafi Jihadist movement nor does he demonstrate a critical inspirational or operational characteristic that is unique to him.

Phase 1

	1	2	3	4	5
Inspiration		**X**			
*Ideology		X			
-Problem	X				
-Enemy	X				
-Solution	X				
-Means		X			
*Charisma			x		
Operational		**X**			
*Strategic		X			
*Tactical		X			
-Timing	X				
-Targets	X				
-Methods		X			
*Organizational				x	

Figure 2.   Phase 1 ordinal evaluation of the Freeman and McCormick leadership variables

An incorporation of the assessment outlined in Figure 2 is visualized in Figure 3, which shows Zarqawi during the first phase in the fourth quadrant. Given the assumptions made in the design of the model, a leadership strike against or decapitation of Zarqawi at this point would result in only an insignificant decrease in the capacity of the organization.
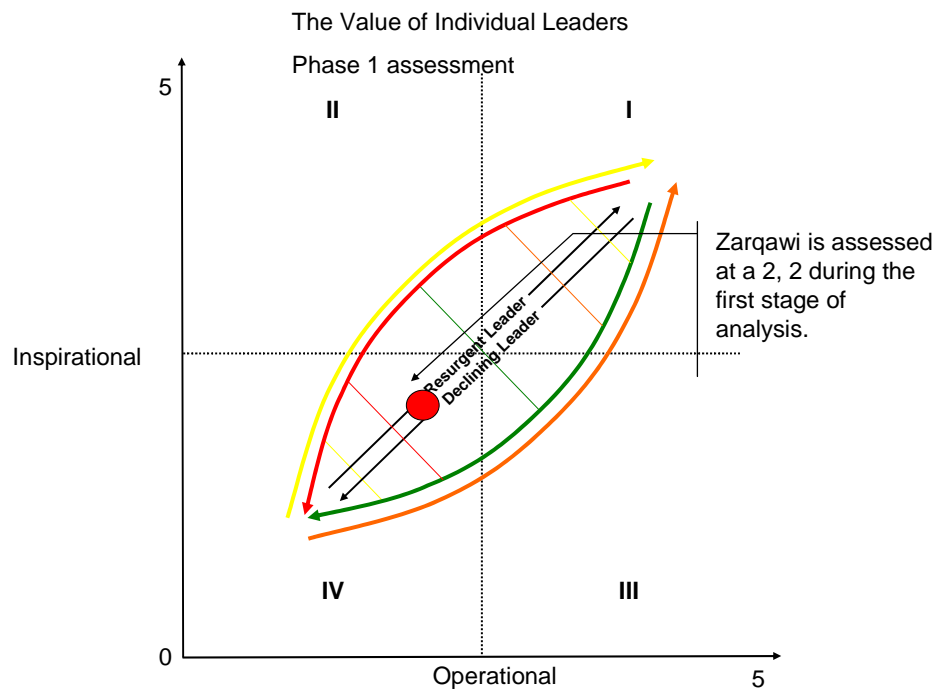
The Value of Individual Leaders

Phase 1 assessment

Figure 3.   Phase 1 assessment of Zarqawi as applied to
    the Terrorist Leadership Model.   (After: Freeman and
                    McCormick)

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V. PHASE II: FROM PRISON TO THE DEFEAT OF THE TALIBAN: ZARQAWI'S EARLY ORGANIZATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

A. FROM PRISON TO HERAT

In May 1999, Zarqawi and Maqdisi were released from the al-Sulwaqa prison through an amnesty program established by King Abdullah. Shortly after their release, Zarqawi traveled to Pakistan where he was later arrested for having a forged visa. After spending time in jail, he was forced to move to Afghanistan where he settled down and began to establish connections with a small group of Palestinians and Jordanians. Shortly after his arrival, Usama Bin Laden encouraged Zarqawi to move to Herat, where he then established a training camp for Jordanian, Palestinian, and Syrian fighters. After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Zarqawi moved on to northern Iraq where he began to establish a network of Islamists in the Kurdish-controlled regions of northern Iraq and Iran.

1. Inspirational

After Zarqawi is released from prison and returns to Afghanistan, there were subtle but observable changes in his leadership abilities in terms of the inspirational variable, both in ideology and charisma. For the most part Zarqawi was still focused on the removal of the apostate regime ruling Jordan. However, because of the influence of Maqdisi and the radicalization from his prison experience, Zarqawi is transformed into a radical jihadist with visions of an Islamist revolution throughout the Arab world. Zarqawi undergoes a subtle shift from a nationalist Jihadist to a trans-national Islamist by taking more central control of the Salafi ideology that he learned from

Maqdisi. Throughout this phase, Zarqawi continued to establish himself as a key figure in the re-definition and manipulation of the Salafi ideology so that it would better justify the struggle to establish a transnational caliphate.

a. Ideology

After Zarqawi was released from prison he faced a decision. If he chose to remain in Jordan, he would have to earn a legitimate living and avoid the Islamists and the Salafist Jihad or face re-incarceration at the hands of the GID. However, Zarqawi knew that if he desired to continue his Jihad against the infidels and apostates, he would have to leave his home country of Jordan. Faced with this decision, Zarqawi moved to Pakistan where he could reestablish the connections he had made on his first trip to the region.[68] It is clear that, at the time, Zarqawi followed a clearly established ideology according to the tenets of Salafism, not his own individual ideological interpretation of Islam. However, as someone who was well educated in Salafist ideology, Zarqawi soon became the center of inspiration and ideology for the close-knit group of Palestinians and Jordanians who found themselves in Afghanistan wanting to carry on the Jihad. [69]

The Salafi ideology was of course not unique to Zarqawi. It was grounded in the teachings of respected Islamist leaders like Maqdisi and Azzam. Zarqawi simply used their ideology to give legitimacy to his own form of Salafism. While Zarqawi's version did not differ in substance from the espoused version of Salafism, he used it

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[68] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 93

[69] Ibid., 95.

to re-identify the source of the central social and political problem, as perceived by the Jihadists, and to justify the legitimacy of violent means for confronting the enemy. The main tool he used to justify those means was by designating Muslims' enemies as "taqfir."[70]

What is clear is that even though Zarqawi modeled his organization on al-Qaeda, he relied on his own interpretation of the Salafi ideology in establishing his operational strategy as well as Zawahiri's justification for the use of suicide missions as legitimate and effective.

Zarqawi was driven by his desire to see the apostate regimes of the region replaced by Islamists, which would ensure a society that was ruled by Sharia. It was the Jordanian monarchy's repression of political activists, ignorance of the Palestinian problem, and appeasement of Jewish and Western societies that Zarqawi was determined to stop. Zarqawi did not use the Salafi ideology to justify his own perceptions; rather, he identified with the authors of Salafism's view of the problem and their justification of jihad to address it.

Zarqawi manipulated the existing ideology in ways that justified expanding notions of the enemy to include Muslims he considered apostates and claimed that Muslims who were guilty of taqfir were legitimate targets of the jihad, thereby, enlarging the definition of legitimate enemies of the jihad.[71] In effect, he could now direct

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[70] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 58.

[71] Adel Darwish, "After Zarqawi," *Middle East*, no. 369 (July 2006), 14, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1082463181&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD.

attacks against whomever he determined to be an enemy. Clearly, Zarqawi was leveraging his increasing influence with jihadists to control and dictate elements of the Salafi ideology.

The solution to the problem, as Zarqawi and the Islamists saw it, was the removal of the apostate regimes in the Arab world. As Michael Radu puts it, their solution was the "expulsion of foreign forces and influences from Islamic societies, and ultimately, the creation of an Islamic state ruled by Sharia law." As Radu explains, Zarqawi believed that the solution was rooted in the Islamic principle of "tawhid," the unity of god and Islam as an all-encompassing religious, political, and social system.[72]

As Zarqawi slowly formed his own small group, he adopted or at least in essence agreed with the greater Islamist community concerning the problem's ultimate solution. Zarqawi had very little real influence on determining and defining the solution. Rather, he simply based his own solution on that of al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups.

Zarqawi believed success could be achieved through violent jihad and the use of terrorism. To justify that conviction, he turned to the religious scholars. Well aware that he lacked the religious legitimacy required to call for violent jihad against his enemy, Zarqawi called upon the respected Salafi religious scholars for validation.[73] He established a network of groups that were

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[72] Radu, *E-Notes: The Demise of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi – FPRI.*

[73] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 72.

ideologically homogenous, and once that support system was in place, Zarqawi was ready to operationalize his strategy and begin to overtly and violently attack the state.[74] Although Zarqawi was unable to dictate legitimate means to achieve the solution throughout the entire phase, there is a subtle, observable, shift as Zarqawi embraces suicide bombings as a legitimate. The legitimacy of suicide attacks is not unique to Zarqawi; Zawahiri has already addressed the issue of legitimacy of suicide attacks and determined the use of suicide attacks to be justified.

b. *Charisma*

Many others shared the ideology, but few were natural leaders with the charismatic qualities to mobilize large numbers with few resources.[75] In Bin Laden's case influence came from his endless resources. In Zarqawi's case, what he offered was more intangible. Yet, in the end, he was probably as successful as Bin Laden with much less financial and material support.

Early on, Zarqawi had taken the nom de guerre, al-Gharib, or the "Stranger". His adoption of that persona appealed to many jihadists, and he used it to "explain the disadvantaged political position of Jihadists."[76] To other jihadists, the implications behind the name "Stranger" were appealing, and Zarqawi made good use of them to justify their struggle while at the same time insulating the group from external criticism and implicitly denigrating the

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[74] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 95.

[75] Ibid., 99.

[76] Fishman, *After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 19.

masses that did not belong.[77] Zarqawi's "Stranger" persona and personal charisma provided the group with both a leader and an explanation for the alienation jihadists face. While Zarqawi adopted the use of terrorism and suicide bombing from Zawahiri, it was Zarqawi's personal influence and charisma that convinced his operatives that suicide was not only effective, but also legitimate. In this regard, therefore, we rate the ability and personal leadership qualities of Zarqawi as critical to founding a small group in Afghanistan.

2. Operational

a. Strategic

In terms of the operational variable, we see a dramatic increase in nearly all facets of Zarqawi's control during this phase. He established the strategic vision for the groups he led and tactically increased his direct participation within the organizations as he dictated operations at that level.

Zarqawi's strategy was to attack the state. However, Zarqawi developed an indirect approach designed for attacking the ruling Arab regimes in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq rather than a direct approach. The indirect approach Zarqawi developed was to attack regimes through unconventional attacks and through the use of terrorism. Zarqawi understood that his organization would not be successful attacking the state through conventional operations. Zarqawi's group did not possess sufficient strength or resources to overtly challenge the state, therefore the indirect, unconventional method appealed to Zarqawi and his group.

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[77] Fishman, *After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 19.

Recruits trained in the Herat camps were intended to infiltrate Jordan for the purpose of toppling the apostate regime. Zarqawi's strategy was basic terrorism: the use of suicide bombers. In a documentary produced by the French and German Arte TV, Anas Sheik Aman indicates clearly how the Herat training camp was intended to prepare recruits for suicide missions.[78] This appears to be the first evidence that Zarqawi was controlling and implementing an organizational strategy consisting of indirect attacks against apostate regimes through the use of suicide bombings. Zarqawi was later to use this same indirect strategy in Iraq.

b.   *Tactical*

As part of the indoctrination of young Islamists, Zarqawi trained recruits to return to their home countries and perpetrate attacks against the state. He exercised tactical control by teaching the recruits to select targets based on their institutional significance. Zarqawi copied Zawahiri's own transition from military techniques to terror tactics and the use of suicide bombings as the most effective tool of terrorism.[79]

As an example of Zarqawi's direct control over targets in this phase, he planned a chemical attack in 2004 against the Jordanian Intelligence headquarters by dictating the target to his operatives. Zarqawi wanted to retaliate against the state intelligence institution as he felt they were responsible for building the case that

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[78] This reference is taken from Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq,* citing a documentary produced by Arte TV (France and Germany), broadcast 1 March 2005. Unpublished original script, *Zarkaoui: La Question Terroriste,* documentary by Patrice Barrat, Najat Rizk, and Ranwa Stephan.

[79] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 80.

incarcerated him.[80]   By directing an attack against a specific target Zarqawi demonstrated his ability to not only determine the strategy, he also determined the target of the attack.   Thus it is plausible to conclude that subsequent attacks in Jordan were a direct result of training received in the Herat camp. It is equally plausible to think that Zarqawi directly controlled subsequent tactical-level operations against apostate regimes.   However,   the   information   supporting   these conclusions is contradictory.[81]

There are several examples of Zarqawi organizing and directing suicide attacks targeting state institutions throughout the region.   Many of the attacks that Zarqawi organized and directed never fully matured; however, the operational direction to conduct attacks originated with Zarqawi while he was organizing small groups in his Herat training camp.   There are several examples of Zarqawi directing attacks throughout the region, in addition to the attack against the GID headquarters, Brissard also indicates Zarqawi directed the assassination of Ali Berjak, head of counterterrorist operations in the GID.[82] Other examples include Zarqawi's supposed planning of the

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[80] Brisard, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda*, 77.

[81] Napoleoni and Brisard disagree on the level of direct supervision and guidance provided by Zarqawi himself. Napoleoni suggests that Zarqawi was much more limited in his influence over the group of recruits trained in Herat, while Brisard argues there are direct connections and ties between the operative and Zarqawi. Brisard argues personal relationships between operatives and Zarqawi exist, and to the extent these relationships existed Zarqawi was able to directly influence these operatives in convincing them of the righteous path of their struggle and the justification of the suicide mission.

[82] Brisard, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda*, 76-77.

millennium plots directed at Western hotels in Amman as well as Zarqawi's implication in the assassination of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley.[83]

Notably, although Zarqawi received funding from al-Qaeda for some operations, he retained his autonomy in deciding the target selection, timing, and method.[84] This level of autonomy, despite al-Qaeda funding was significant and demonstrated the key role Zarqawi played in maintaining the group's autonomous operational strategy.

c. *Organizational*

Zarqawi's later success as a radical group leader can be traced back to the relationships he established through the Salafist networks, mosques, and friendship ties in Afghanistan. He was very skillful in promoting the reputation within the Salafi Jihadist camps that was to facilitate much of his future success. Former prison inmates and others who spent time with Zarqawi talk of his ability to organize individuals and to establish credibility through his demonstrated relationships with influential authors and advisors within the Islamist community.[85]

As Zarqawi established himself in Herat, he slowly organized a loose network of contacts that he could

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[83] Although the reporting available is inconclusive with regard to Zarqawi's actual role in these events, it is possible that Zarqawi was intimately involved in the operations. If Zarqawi was involved in the attacks it is likely that he was instrumental in determining the actual targets of the attacks. In both cases the attacks occurred in Jordan and it is understood that Zarqawi took every opportunity to execute targets within Jordan based on his own personal hatred of the regime.

[84] See Brissard, 74. Brissard claims al Qaeda provided $35,000 to Zarqawi for an attack against Israel. The operation failed and the two suicide bombers Zarqawi dispatched were arrested in a routine inspection at the Turkish border.

[85] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation.*

leverage for logistical and financial support. Napoleoni addresses several theories concerning the source of that funding and resources, but she discounts the idea that Zarqawi received funding from the Pakistani Intelligence. Evidence does suggest, however, that Zarqawi received significant support from the Taliban.[86]

Zarqawi leveraged his reputation in Afghanistan and was able to establish links and friendships with major players throughout Afghanistan, including Zawahiri and bin Laden. Zarqawi used those relationships to facilitate the establishment of his own groups, networks, and loose affiliations. Numerous Jihadists were attracted to the organization for various reasons. First, some differed with al Qaeda in ideology, some felt more comfortable and willing to trust a fellow Jordanian who shared Palestinian friendships and links. Some were also attracted by the myth and iconic status that Zarqawi had attained through his contacts in prison and in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In sum, through skillful manipulation of shared and trusted contacts, Zarqawi established himself and his organization in the region.

When evaluated as a contributing factor of the operational variable, Zarqawi's organizational skill pushes his position farther to the right on the operational axis. It is clear that at that time in his organization's development, it was Zarqawi's connections, relationships, and reputation that furthered the group's capacity. There is little evidence to suggest that there was another individual with the equivalent organizational skills to

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[86] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 80.

achieve the same success. Thus, we conclude that, at the time, Zarqawi was the crucial link to his organization's future.

B.   PHASE 2 ASSESSMENT

Our analysis of Phase 2, the period from Zarqawi's imprisonment to the defeat of the Taliban, finds that the composite assessment of the inspirational variable in regard to Zarqawi's leadership qualities is considerably higher than during Phase 1. There is a slight increase in the strength of the charismatic element and a demonstrated ability to directly control aspects of the ideological sub-components.

Once Zarqawi established his small network of operatives in Afghanistan, he experienced the luxury of being an autonomous leader of a small group. His autonomy and freedom to conduct operations of his choosing was critical to the organization's independence. And in exercising it, Zarqawi demonstrated all three aspects of the tactical variable, choosing targets, determining timing, and ordering the methods, thereby manifesting the central role he had in the organization at that point.

One consideration in evaluating leadership qualities that must be accounted for is a leader's ability to replicate the capability in a subordinate. Because Zarqawi did not have any particular tactical skills, it could be argued that decision-making ability required at the tactical level to determine targets, timing, and methods could then be easily replicated by others within the group. However, our point is not that the tactical skill couldn't be replicated, but that it was the skillful leadership and vision that Zarqawi demonstrated in maintaining the

autonomy of the group while making the necessary tactical decisions that was the critical component.

For Phase 2, therefore, we assess the inspirational variable as moderate, a slight increase from Phase 1. In assessing the operational variable, the composite assessment increases significantly from Phase 1. This increase is based on evidence showing Zarqawi's strong organizational contributions during this phase and the significance both at the time and for the future of his operational autonomy. Figure 4 represents our overall assessment of both variables based on the composite assessment of the sub-variables.

Phase 2

	1	2	3	4	5
Inspiration			**X**		
*Ideology		X			
-Problem	X				
-Enemy			x		
-Solution	X				
-Means		X			
*Charisma				X	
Operational				**X**	
*Strategic				x	
*Tactical				x	
-Timing				x	
-Targets				x	
-Methods				x	
*Organizational					x

Figure 4.   Phase 2 ordinal evaluation of the Freeman and McCormick leadership variables

An incorporation of the assessment outlined in Figure 4 is visualized in Figure 5, which shows Zarqawi during the second phase in the first quadrant. Thus, during that

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period, Zarqawi demonstrated a critical significance on the operational axis. This increased significance can be accounted for by considering two significant attributes: Zarqawi's organizational skill and his organization's autonomous operational position. At this point, it is not clear whether Zarqawi's organization could survive a decapatative strike against the leader. Although the organization has some hierarchical organization, it is heavily dependent on Zarqawi's close personal relationships and ties to other jihad groups and on his skillful diplomacy with the al-Qaeda leadership in maintaining the group's autonomy. Thus, decapitation of the leader at this point could possibly result in a significant decrease in the organization's operational capacity and force the group to become more closely allied with al-Qaeda.
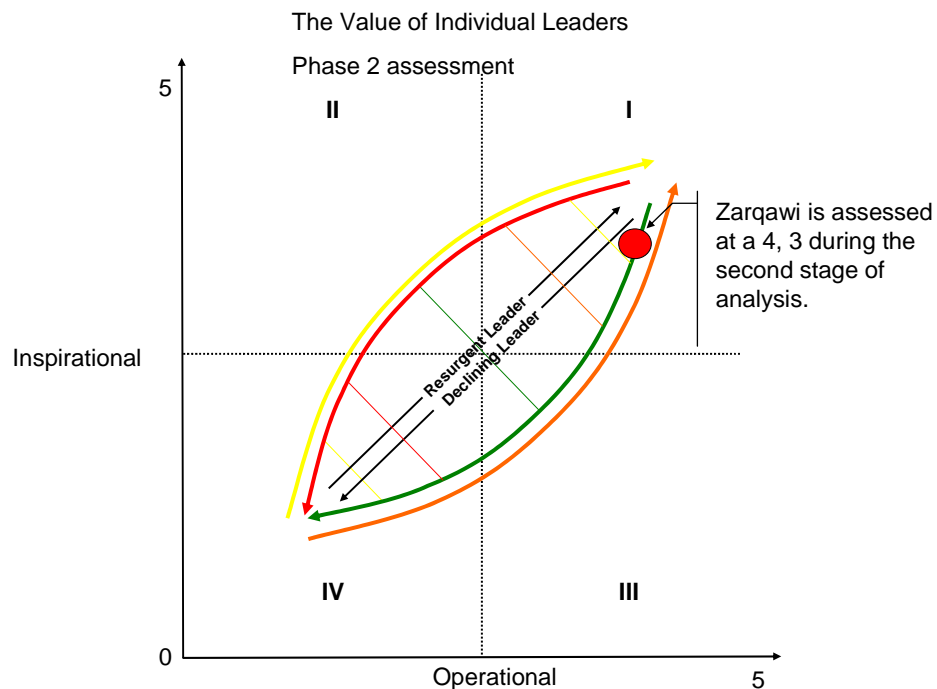
The Value of Individual Leaders

Phase 2 assessment

Figure 5.   Phase 2 assessment of Zarqawi as applied to the Terrorist Leadership Model. (After: Freeman and McCormick)

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VI. PHASE III: FROM KURDISTAN TO DEATH: THE ZARQAWI ORGANIZATION IN IRAQ;

A.   KURDISTAN TO DEATH

In our analysis of the third and final phase of Zarqawi's life, we will look at the period after Zarqawi fled Afghanistan, which covers his operations in Iraq and ends with his death in June 2006. In terms of Zarqawi's leadership qualities, this final phase is a bit of a capstone, as he incorporates everything he has learned into his leadership methodology, skillfully leverages all of his relationships, dictates his own strategies, and is rewarded with an outpouring of support from the Islamist community in the region.

The 2003 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan forced Zarqawi to flee from Herat to the Kurdish-controlled area of northern Iraq.[87] Some speculate that Zarqawi moved there because he believed that the United States would subsequently invade Iraq. It may be more plausible to conclude that he left Herat for northern Iraq because that area was relatively ungoverned and thus would provide better protection for his group. In addition, Zarqawi had close ties with Ansar al-Islam (Supporters of Islam), one of a number of Sunni Islamist groups based in the Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq. Those relationships may have

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[87] There is some discrepancy as to where Zarqawi went as the Northern Alliance closed in on Herat. Some accounts have Zarqawi fighting in Khandahar and Tora Bora along side Al Qaeda. While these are plausible events they are not critical to the analysis. There also appears to be some evidence that after Zarqawi departed Afghanistan that he spent time in Iran. However, this information is anecdotal and is not critical for this analysis. For simplicity, the second phase of analysis ends when Zarqawi departs Herat and the third phase of analysis will begin with Zarqawi establishing himself in Northern Iraq in the Kurdish areas.

allowed Zarqawi to easily integrate into the areas controlled by Salafi Islamist groups.[88]

1. Inspirational

In late 2001, Zarqawi moved to the Salafi-controlled area of Kurdistan, where he prepared to continue his jihad against apostates. This would eventually also become a fight against the United States and the forces of the coalition. Throughout this period, Zarqawi experienced significant success, which may be attributed to several factors. First, since the late twentieth century, a growing Salafi Islamist movement had been developing throughout Iraq.[89] The increased acceptance of the Salafi ideology provided Zarqawi an ideologically similar population that he could leverage in his struggle to attack the far enemy and to establish a new *Iraqi* caliphate. Second, Zarqawi experienced significant success by manipulating the Salafi ideology to create his own version, which provided a means to mobilize the Sunnis against the Shi'ites. Lastly, Zarqawi was successful in mobilizing significant numbers of foreign jihadists for the insurgency in Iraq. Thus, in her article, "Profile of a Killer," Napoleoni describes Zarqawi as "a new symbolic leader of the fight against America and a magnet for whoever was looking to be part of that struggle."[90] Zarqawi's mythical appeal resulted in significant support from the Salafi and other Sunni populations throughout the region. It is that perception of his charismatic qualities that contributed heavily to our

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[88] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 106-107.

[89] Ibid., 147.

[90] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

assessment of an increase in the significance of the inspirational variable throughout this final phase.

a. *Ideology*

The Salafist ideology continued to provide the foundation for Zarqawi's group ideology and that of other associated movements in Iraq. However, Zarqawi's strategic decision to wage war against the Shi'ite created a problem: it could not be supported by the traditional Salafist ideology that condemned waging war against fellow Muslims. Thus, if Zarqawi was to mobilize the Salafi and other Sunni populations in Iraq, he had to somehow convince his followers that waging war against fellow Muslims was religiously and ideologically justified. Convincing the Salafist and other Sunni populations would be difficult. Even Maqdisi and Usama bin Laden abhorred the idea of Muslims fighting Muslims.[91] Nonetheless, Zarqawi was successful in his redefinition of parts of the Salafist ideology to include Shi'ites as enemies and legitimate targets. To justify this change, Zarqawi manipulated his groups and associates' perceptions of the Shi'ite population, claiming that they were colluding with the U.S. coalition just as Shi'ites had allegedly conspired with the Mongols and Tartars in the thirteenth century to destroy Baghdad.[92] Drawing on history as the basis of his claims, Zarqawi went on to apply the concept of "takfir," (the act of identifying someone as a *kafir*, or unbeliever) to accuse

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[91] Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation*, 150.

[92] Ibid.

the Shi'ites of apostasy.[93] As Gilles Keppel points out, in order to justify committing the Salafists and other Sunnis to a civil war, Zarqawi identified Shi'ites as *al-rafadin,* or rejectionists, and non-Muslims. According to Adel Darwish, Zarqawi had a pathological hatred of "unbelievers," which in Zarqawi's mind included all Muslims that did not share his Salafi beliefs.[94] Through this manipulation and effective use of propaganda, redefining the enemy in terms of those he personally considered the "near" enemy, Zarqawi effectively modified the Salafi ideology. Prior to this phase, Zarqawi's primary enemies had been the apostate Jordanian monarchy and the Jewish state of Israel. Now he was confronted with new enemies. First and foremost, the United States and its coalition forces presented a major impediment to the establishment of the caliphate. However, identifying the "far enemy" did not require an ideological shift unlike the radical ideological shift required to identify fellow brother Muslims as an enemy of the caliphate. It was this control over the ideology that ultimately increased his central importance in terms of the inspirational variable of the leadership model.

As the leader of the Islamist movement in Iraq, Zarqawi set the boundaries as to what methods were appropriate to achieve his ultimate goal, an Islamic

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[93] note: "takfir":This is the act of identifying someone as a *kafir* - unbeliever. Some Muslims believe that the right to do this lies only with God. Some, however, think that humans are allowed to make such an identification. Doing so has been an important part of Islamic fundamentalism - Muslims are not allowed to wage war on each other, but they can wage war on unbelievers. Thus, if a society or group can be labeled as unbelieving, it becomes religiously acceptable to engage in even armed battle with them.

[94] Darwish, *After Zarqawi*, 14.

caliphate. When the methods or the victims of operations violated basic Muslim principles, Zarqawi would solicit a spiritual advisor, either a respected scholar or a religious member, to issue a Fatwa that would justify the methods used. To the Muslim communities in the region there were several methods and targets that were especially unsavory and deplorable, and Zarqawi was harshly criticized for some of his methods. However, even as criticism mounted in the Arab world, he resolutely defended himself, justifying attacks against Shi'ites as a rooting out of "a cancer on the body of Islam."[95] With the invasion and presence of foreign invaders inside Iraq, Zarqawi was now able to identify both a "far" enemy and its occupation of Iraq as part of the problem. Zarqawi believed that external influences, pressures of a globalized world, and, most recently, the foreign occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, exploited Muslims. These factors formed the foundation of the problem.

For Zarqawi, achieving the ultimate solution required making changes through violent Jihad and attacking the Jihadists' enemies both near and far. After his move to Iraq, Zarqawi was presented with a unique opportunity, by the presence of U.S. and coalition forces, to directly engage the West in fierce attacks. Conscious of his significant military disadvantage and lacking the ability to attack the enemy with conventional tactics, Zarqawi used a more indirect approach. His response to the enemy was to use suicide bombers and other forms of terrorist attacks.[96]

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[95] Darwish, *After Zarqawi*, 14.

[96] Ibid.; Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

The critical and most significant shift is in Zarqawi's interpretation and justification of the enemy. It is at this point that Zarqawi was able to unilaterally determine new enemies of Salafism. This ability to identify and justify Muslim enemies evidences the high level of Zarqawi's control at the time over the ideological component of the model's inspirational variable. Zarqawi's notable ability at this time to redefine the enemy strongly suggests that Zarqawi is either moving to or is already at a high level in regard to the inspirational variable.

b. Charisma

Most of the indicators of Zarqawi's charisma during this phase come from anecdotal accounts and are difficult to measure and quantify in terms of the inspirational variable. However, we had some direct (undocumented) communication with several members of Zarqawi's organization, nearly all or whom admitted their admiration and respect for Zarqawi because of his personal character. They not only respected his leadership, but also his religious and spiritual authority. Their respect was apparently based on their experience of his knowledge of the Qur'an and his interpretation of Salafi ideology. In an interview conducted by Michael Radu, the Jordanian journalist, Abdullah Abu Rumman, who had met and knew Zarqawi personally, described him as "very impressive" and "very charismatic."[97] A 2006 *Economist* article gives an indication of Zarqawi's personal likeability and his charismatic character. It points out that Zarqawi grew in

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[97] Radu, *E-Notes: The Demise of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi – FPRI.*

popularity amongst the jihadists because he led the Jihad in person, as compared to bin Laden and Zawahiri who were directing the Jihad from afar.

Another aspect of Zarqawi's charismatic appeal was his ability to elude capture. Jeffrey Fleishman describes how Zarqawi's group, at one point, sought to portray him as the "Harry Houdini of Iraq, outwitting his American pursuers as he hides in towns scattered throughout the western desert."[98] All of these factors contributed to Zarqawi's mystique and almost mythical presence. Nonetheless, for our purposes, the question of his charisma is still vague. Probably the best evidence of it comes from videos the U.S. military discovered in Iraq while pursuing him. The videos show Zarqawi as a kind of celebrity who is always at the center of attention. Many insurgents who were associated with his network in Iraq indicate that it was Zarqawi's "hands on" and "personal" approach that inspired them to endorse his strategy.[99]

When all of the anecdotal evidence is analyzed and evaluated, it is plausible to assess the charismatic element of Zarqawi's leadership as a significant contribution in regard to the inspirational variable. It is impossible to say, of course, whether some other individual who professed the same ideology would have been able to mobilize the number of jihadists that Zarqawi did. But his charisma was an element of his character that other leaders

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[98] Jeffrey Fleishman, "THE CONFLICT IN IRAQ; U.S. Ponders Iraq Fight After Zarqawi; the Militant may have Suffered Grave Injuries. If He Dies, the Insurgency's Divisions could Widen." *Los Angeles Times* May 28, 2005, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=846097681&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD.

[99] Author's personal notes.

with similar goals seemed to lack. Therefore, we conclude that, in respect to the charismatic element of Zarqawi's leadership ability, it is a significant component of the inspirational variable.

2. Operational

At this point in the third phase of Zarqawi's life, taking an indirect approach to reaching his goals proved to be the only option open for Zarqawi. Thus, in the early months of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Zarqawi chose to not overtly attack coalition forces. Instead, he continued to develop his group infrastructure and to swell the ranks before changing strategies to overt attacks.[100]

a. Strategic

In Iraq, Zarqawi had decided on a two-front strategy. First, he would continue to attack U.S. and coalition troops in an attempt to force the "infidels" to leave Arab lands. His second strategic choice was to open a front against the Shi'ite. For Zarqawi, these choices, to target both U.S. forces and the Shi'ites, were not only strategic, but also personal.[101]

It is especially noteworthy that, during this phase, Zarqawi made a conscious decision to directly and openly engage the Iraqi Shi'ite population. He is said to have believed that a civil war would continue the destabilizing of the country and break up the political process that was to some extent taking place. Apparently, it was also an attempt to delegitimize the political process by leveraging the Sunni Baathist community against

[100] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

[101] Steven Brooke, "The Rise of Zarqawi: Is He the Next Bin Laden?" *Weekly Standard* 9, no. 37 (June 7, 2004), 14-15; Zarqawi's decision to target the Shia was personal because of his own deep hatred for the Shia population.

participation in the election process. These aspects are all critical to our assessment of the operational variable in respect to Zarqawi's leadership ability. To mobilize other Arab Sunnis to support the Sunni population in Iraq, Zarqawi chose a strategy intended to drive a wedge between the Shi'ites and Sunnis and "ultimately drag the [entire] Islamic nation into battle."[102]

Zarqawi's second front was against the Americans. His purpose here was to erode the U.S. political and domestic support for the war in Iraq. By increasing U.S. casualties Zarqawi believed the popular domestic support for the war could be eroded and force a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. To mobilize foreign audiences against supporting the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, Zarqawi added kidnappings and beheadings to his strategic methodology. His followers attacked Shi'ite religious and political leaders as a means to undermine the political process and infrastructure as a means to delegitimize U.S., coalition, and Iraqi efforts to provide security and stability.

b.   Tactical

Probably the most important issue for this analysis is the level of control Zarqawi had over tactical operations. While Zarqawi was not central to the tactical execution, he was very central in identifying tactical targets according to their strategic significance. Zarqawi's meticulous selection of each target was based on his awareness of its political or religious significance and the public exposure the attack would generate. From his perspective, media exposure was paramount to the success of the operations. The resulting publicity contributed to the

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[102] Radu, *E-Notes: The Demise of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi – FPRI.*

fulfillment of other requirements of the network, such as recruiting and generating necessary resources without reliance on al-Qaeda. This independence allowed Zarqawi to stand firm without taking directions from bin Laden, since he was not reliant on him for logistical support.

Zarqawi achieved tactical success in numerous operations that had a significant global impact. He directed the bombing of both the UN headquarters, which resulted in the withdrawal of the UN from Iraq because of a perceived lack of security in the region, and the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad.[103] These were tactical operations with long-term strategic implications. Zarqawi also directed several attacks against Shi'ite religious institutions and establishments, by which he apparently hoped to fracture any Shi'ite-Sunni relationship and prevent an Iraqi nationalist movement from developing. The attacks seemed to encourage a civil war between the sects that would ultimately destroy any possibility of stability and security.

Except for some operations that were executed through a decentralized authority, such as daily targets of opportunity, Zarqawi controlled and dictated the timing of major spectacular attacks such as the U.N HQ's and the Jordanian Embassy bombings. Zarqawi directed the timing of these attacks in order to maximize media exposure as well as timing the attack to coincide with political and civil instability. By controlling the timing of the attacks Zarqawi maximized the dramatic effect and ultimately forced the U.N. to withdraw from Iraq. Also, during the period leading up to elections in January of

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[103] Riedel, *Al Qaeda Strikes Back*, 24.

2005, in an apparent effort to influence voter turnout and support of national elections, attacks on civil authority were prevalent. Zarqawi timed these attacks to contradict public statements about security, thereby indirectly coercing nonparticipation by the suspicious Sunni population. He also timed attacks against coalition military forces during periods when coalition members were facing heavy criticism at home for supporting the occupation. Zarqawi chose contractors and military members as targets for a similar reason, to capitalize on criticism and anti-war supporters in coalition domestic politics.

In this phase there are several examples of how Zarqawi and his organization drifted from the core al Qaeda ideology. Most notably, in a letter in 2005 bin Laden's second-in-command, Zawahiri, disagreed with Zarqawi's methods and their effectiveness.[104] However, Zarqawi, refusing to be influenced by the senior al-Qaeda leadership, did not alter his methodology until later, when al-Qaeda's support became critical. He explained his Shi'ite strategy to the al-Qaeda leadership as a necessity to awaken the inattentive Sunnis and his targeting of the Shi'ites in religious, political and military depth as a means to provoke a backlash and mobilize the Sunnis.[105] However, eventually, after pledging his allegiance to the greater al-Qaeda, he was influenced to moderate his methods and consider the victims of his attacks.

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[104] "Text of Zarqawi Letter," http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2004/02/040212-al-zarqawi.htm (accessed September 2007).

[105] Fishman, *After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 19.

The information available indicates that Zarqawi was very much the primary decision-maker in selecting the targets, timing, and methods of attacks. The available evidence supports our assessment that Zarqawi's leadership ability was relatively high in terms of the model's operational variable. Zarqawi's willingness to attack, kidnap, and behead civilians demonstrates his significant influence and control over key tactical decisions. At this point, it does not appear that other leaders of the Salafi ideology would be willing to direct or justify attacks on other Muslims or grisly beheadings of civilian targets. These tactics appear to be unique to Zarqawi and could possibly represent unique characteristics that could not be replicated by other leaders if Zarqawi was captured or killed.

c. Organizational

Throughout all of Zarqawi's experiences and travels he demonstrated a significant ability to leverage kinship and religious ties. The contacts he established enabled him to develop a very robust network throughout Iraq and the entire region. Zarqawi was able to leverage organizations throughout Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to finance and provide logistical support to his growing network. It is not surprising, therefore, that Napoleoni describes him as an able and gifted leader and organizer.[106]

Evidence from the extensive reporting available indicates that Zarqawi had significant influence in respect to the operational components of the leadership model. As the organization grew in size, Zarqawi was less able to maintain direct control over operations. Zarqawi

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[106] Napoleoni, *Profile of a Killer*, 37-43.

decentralized operations by establishing local and regional emirs throughout Iraq. The regional emirs appointed local emirs to control military operations at the local level. Each emir commanded operational cells that were responsible for conducting military operations in the region. In addition to the local and regional emirs controlling military operations throughout Iraq, splinter groups conducted kidnappings in the name of al Qaeda in Iraq. Nonetheless, his dispersed and decentralized organization conducted operations based on their understanding of Zarqawi's strategy and intent.[107] Within his greater Iraqi network, Zarqawi also established several subordinate cells or networks, each of which was designated for specific tasks. There was a network of religious scholars that could issue fatwas justifying actions taken by the greater network. This cell was also responsible for providing spiritual guidance, not only to Zarqawi but also to members of the network as a means to ensure the maintenance of a homogenous ideology throughout. Zarqawi also established a media network that was responsible for the release of the propaganda that generated financial support and ensured that Zarqawi's message would get published through print and electronic outlets.[108]

Zarqawi's organizational skills allowed for the creation of robust network operatives. As the network developed and institutionalized Zarqawi's ideology and strategy, it naturally became more decentralized. As we have said, its effectiveness can be attributed to the close ties and relationships Zarqawi established throughout his

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[107] For more on this, see Brian Fishman, United States Military Academy, Countering Terrorism Center, *Militant Ideology Atlas.*

[108] Darwish, *After Zarqawi*, 14.

career. For friendship, kinship, and religious ties are
critical to the establishment of such cohesive and
effective operational networks. Zarqawi and his
organizational skills were also critical to the network
that he developed in Iraq, for it too depended on the close
ties he had brokered. Zarqawi's personal characteristics,
his charismatic, ideological, and operational skill, were
critical also to the success of the organization, and the
ties between groups and other organizations would be
difficult for any successor to replicate. Because of
Zarqawi's central role in organizing the network, we rate
his value to the organization in regard to the model's
organization variable as quite significant.

B.   PHASE 3 ASSESSMENT

In the final phase of our analysis, Zarqawi
significantly increases in importance in nearly all
aspects. However, as the size and the capacity of the
organization increases, there is a corresponding increase
in the decentralization of operations. In response to the
decentralization of the operational aspects, Zarqawi, in
the late stages of the phase, declines along the
operational axis moving him closer towards the second
quadrant of the model. The decentralization of operations
allowed his subordinate leadership to operate semi-
autonomously. In regard to the effectiveness of leadership
decapitation, we would expect decapitation to become less
effective as Zarqawi institutionalized the operational
aspects. Figure 6 shows our assessment of Zarqawi's central
importance to the organization. The assessment of Zarqawi
in this phase is assessed holistically, however, in order
to address the institutionalization of some operational
factors in the late stages of the final phase, Zarqawi

begins a subtle shift to the left along the operational
axis.   This subtle shift is visualized in Figure 7 but is
not depicted in Figure 6.

Phase 3

	1	2	3	4	5
Inspiration					**X**
*Ideology				x	
-Problem		x			
-Enemy					x
-Solution				x	
-Means					x
*Charisma					x
Operational					**X**
*Strategic					x
*Tactical					x
-Timing				x	
-Targets				x	
-Methods				x	
*Organizational					x

Figure 6.   Phase 3 Ordinal evaluation of the Freeman
            and McCormick leadership variables

The Value of Individual Leaders
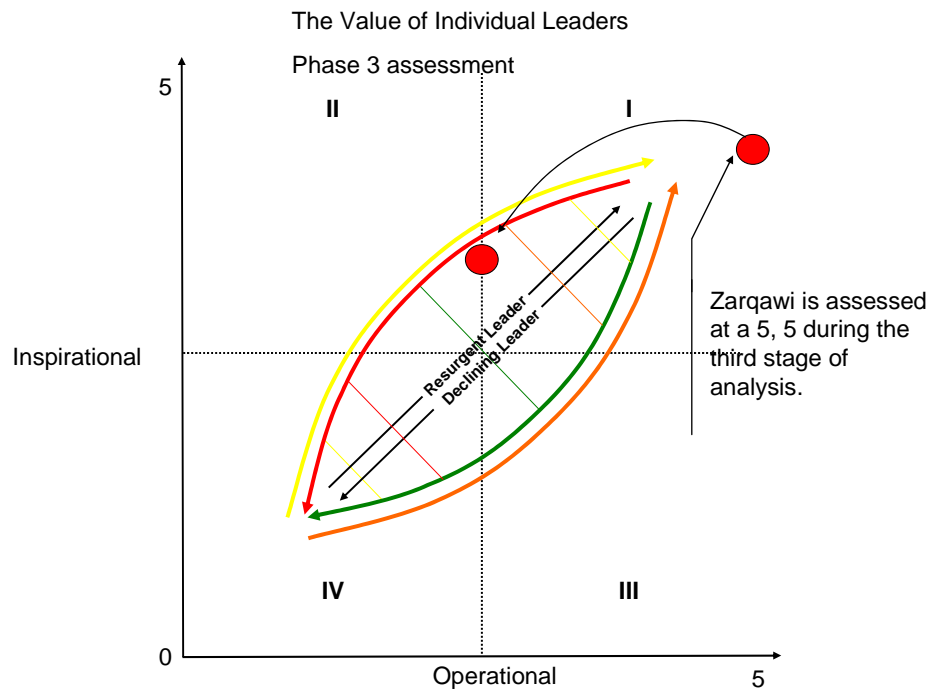
Phase 3 assessment

Figure 7.　　　Phase 3 assessment of Zarqawi as applied to
the Terrorist Leadership Model.　(After: Freeman and
McCormick)

As Zarqawi moves to the highest point in the first
quadrant, indicating a leader that is critical to the
survivability of an organization, he also manages to
decentralize and institutionalize some of the
organizational and tactical factors.　By institutionalizing
some operational factors, Zarqawi is able to reduce the
vulnerability of the organization to a decapatative strike.
In the late stages of phase III, the decentralization of
operations corresponds to a subtle shift along the
operational axis.　This subtle shift is represented in
Figure 7; Zarqawi moves from the upper left part of
quadrant 1 to a location nested between quadrants II and I.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. IS DECAPITATION AN EFFECTIVE COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY?

Decapitation or leadership targeting is not an effective counter terrorism strategy as applied to this case. If the desired end-state of the leadership targeting strategy is the defeat of the Zarqawi organization, leadership decapitation did not achieve its goal. Zarqawi was killed in June 2006; the decapitation did result in a temporary decrease in operational capacity. However, this decapitative strike did not defeat the Zarqawi organization. The organization re-organized around the leadership of Ayub al-Masri who has slightly modified Zarqawi's strategy but the organization still exists within Iraq in terms of membership, capacity, and ideology.[109] Many scholars, analysts, and investigative reporters admit that even though al Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike, the organization continues to exist in much the same form as it existed prior to the strike that killed Zarqawi.[110] Interestingly, statistical data from the Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) indicate that the overall number of incidents executed by al-Qaeda in Iraq is significantly lower since al Zarqawi's death. Statistics provided by TKB indicate that al-Qaeda in Iraq conducted, on average, 4.5 attacks per month over the period from March 2003 to June 2006. Since June 2006, al Qaeda in Iraq is averaging less

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[109] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Kyle Dabruzzi, "Jihad's New Leaders – Middle East Quarterly," http://www.meforum.org/article/1710 (accessed September, 2007).

[110] Fishman, *After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 19; Farhana Ali, "Zarqawi Death Won't End War," UPI, http://www.rand.org/commentary/061006UPI.html (accessed September, 2007); Darwish, *After Zarqawi*, 14.

than one attack per month.[111] This decrease in operational activity was anticipated, however, many believe al Qaeda in Iraq will slowly reorganize and reestablish an operational tempo close to that prior to Zarqawi's death. One factor that is not consistent throughout this window is U.S. security efforts. It is possible that the decrease in operational attacks can be attributed to the increase in U.S. troops providing security in Iraq and not to a diminished capacity based on the death of Zarqawi.

Zarqawi's group in Iraq is still operationally viable even though there has been a decrease in effectiveness to date. However, as discussed above, it is unclear at this point if the decrease in operational capacity is a result of the loss of the leader, the increased troop strength, or a modification of the inspirational and operational factors under new leadership. Zarqawi's organization may transform into a more moderate organization under the leadership of Ayub al-Masri and in the future may not resemble the Zarqawi organization, however, I do not believe this is justification or validation of a successful decapitation strategy.

The assumption made by Freeman and McCormick is that a decapatative strike against a leader who demonstrates a high level of importance in the inspirational and operational axes could result in the defeat or marginalization of the group. The basis of the assumption is that the organization is dependent on the leader; killing or arresting the leader could leave the

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[111] The data Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) uses is derived from the RAND corporation terrorism incident database. The statistical data is compiled using various analytical tools found on the Terrorism Knowledge Base website, for more on this data please see http://www.tkb.org/AnalyticalTools.jsp

organization leaderless and incapacitated. Freeman and McCormick address four secondary variables that also impact on the success of leadership targeting.[112] The secondary factors may also have an impact on the success or failure of leadership targeting. The four secondary variables are: 1) effects on leaders, 2) effects on organizations, 3) reactions by various actors, and 4) issues of practicality.[113]

In determining success or failure in the Zarqawi case, the secondary variables should also be considered. The first variable to consider is to assess who will replace Zarqawi. In this case, Ayub al-Masri was declared the successor to Zarqawi. If leadership targeting is to be effective, successors should be less capable leaders. A year after Zarqawi's death it is still too early to determine if al-Masri is more or less capable as a leader. However, to date, al-Masri appears to be relatively successful in keeping the organization together. Some indications point to Sunni Arabs breaking with al Qaeda in Iraq, this break can be explained by the ideological differences between the groups, not because al-Masri is a less effective leader. The break between Iraqi Sunni's and Zarqawi's network was inevitable as the two groups are ideologically dissimilar and only created an alliance because of a shared common enemy. Second, what are the effects on organizations? This includes things like defense, decentralization and uncertainty. In this case there was little adverse reaction, domestically or

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[112] Michael Freeman and Gordon McCormick, *Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Groups: A Strategic Assessment*, ed. unpublished.

[113] For a more detailed description of the secondary variables see Freeman and McCormick, pp 39-44.

internationally, toward the killing of Zarqawi. The next consideration that might impact the success or failure of targeted killing is the reactions by various actors. In this case, the concern is determining if the targeted killing of Zarqawi was morally acceptable by the international community as well as the domestic audience. At this point, it appears that the death of Zarqawi did not significantly impact sympathizers. Radical members of Zarqawi's organization declared Zarqawi a martyr, however this claim did not translate into a significant outpouring of support or increased allegiance to the organization from outside actors. The last consideration is the issue of practicality. In the Zarqawi case practicality is not a critical consideration. There are certainly questions of effectiveness and questions concerning the commitment of resources to leadership targeting. However, the U.S military occupied Iraq, Zarqawi's operational area. As long as intelligence could determine Zarqawi's location he could realistically be interdicted within minutes because of the availability and relative proximity of counter terrorist forces.

The Zarqawi case study assesses Zarqawi as critical to the organization in both the inspirational and organizational axis in the final phase discussed in Chapter VI. However, the decapitation of Zarqawi did not produce the expected results. One explanation for this is that Zarqawi was able to institutionalize both the inspirational and operational factors at the same rate at which he increased in importance to the organization. By institutionalizing the inspirational and operational aspects, the organization became less vulnerable to the

decapatative strike. The second explanation is that the problem, addressed in Chapter IV, still provides the organization with a reason to exist and to continue to fight. Nouri al-Maliki described Zarqawi's death as a great day for Iraq; however, as a writer for the Economist magazine eloquently stated, "The safest bet this week is that, even without Mr. Zarqawi, the violence will go on until the rage that nourishes it has been uprooted".[114]

Based on the Zarqawi case study and applying the leadership model to this case, the results indicate that a decapitation strategy would result in a short-term drop in the effectiveness of Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq network. However, the long-term health of the network is based in the Salafi ideology.[115] Therefore, leadership decapitation, overall, would not be an effective strategy in defeating this network. Zarqawi possessed organizational skills, an ability to network throughout the Islamist population by leveraging social and kinship ties, a strong central figure in the operational variable and charismatic qualities that are difficult to replace. However, Zarqawi is not the critical, central element to the success of the organization. The willing pool of Salafi Jihadists to draw upon is not affected by the death of Zarqawi.[116] The Salafi ideology is not generated through Zarqawi himself, rather

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[114] Economist, "Leaders: After Zarqawi – After Zarqawi; Iraq," *The Economist* 379, no. 8481 (June 10, 2006), 9, http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1052982431&Fmt=7&clientId=65345&RQT=309&VName=PQD.

[115] White, *The Death of Zarqawi: Organizational and Operational Implications for the Insurgency*, 3.

[116] Chris Heffelfinger, "The Ideological Voices of the Jihadi Movement," http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2370233 (accessed September 2007).

Zarqawi is a kind of messenger that operationalizes the Salafi ideology proselytized by the religious figures. In effect, the Salafi ideology is not a brainchild of Zarqawi and thereby removing Zarqawi does not remove the source of the inspiration. Operationally, Zarqawi was effective in articulating a strategy that enabled operations. One has to ask; if Zarqawi is killed will someone else be able to fill the operational void created by his death? In the case of Zarqawi, he did not posses a critical skill that no one else could have replicated it also appears that Ayub al-Masri has been able to replace Zarqawi. Many even believe that al-Masri may even be a more formidable adversary vis-à-vis al Zarqawi and may be more successful because he has taken a more moderate position with regard to attacks on civilians and justification of attacks on Shia Muslims. [117] This also might indicate that as al-Masri takes control of the organization he will transform the Zarqawi network into a network more in line with the greater al-Qaeda. If this is true, was Zarqawi's decapitation a successful strategy? I would argue there are subtle differences between the organization led by Zarqawi and the organization now being led by al-Masri. However, these subtle differences do not make the al-Masri network a new organization. In this case only sustained decapitation would possibly result in success. The cost of participation has to be escalated to the point that not only would future leaders be deterred from ascending to the leadership position, an effective strategy would also have to focus on fracturing the legitimacy of the organization and deter future participation and allegiance to the ideology. In order to

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[117] Gartenstein-Ross and Dabruzzi, *Jihad's New Leaders - Middle East Quarterly.*

deter support and participation another alternative or solution has to be of value to potential recruits and supporters of the ideology. In short, the root cause has to be identified and addressed with moderates offering a solution to the problem. Until the problem is addressed and the radical Islamist population feels the issues are adequately resolved the source of the frustration will continue to exist and will only lead to more radical solutions.

B.   SECOND AND THIRD ORDER EFFECTS AND BENEFITS

If a decapitation strategy is ineffective in this case, what are the associated benefits that justify continuing a decapitation strategy?

1.   Intelligence and Visibility

The foremost reason to pursue a decapitation strategy, in this case, is to establish the depth of the network. By pursuing this strategy the military organization tasked with the kill or capture mission of Zarqawi must anticipate where and when Zarqawi will be in a specific location in order to direct forces to that location for interdiction. In order to determine where to interdict Zarqawi, multiple levels of operatives had to be identified, their links to Zarqawi established, the relationship that operative or that cell had to Zarqawi, and the access that operative had to Zarqawi. Through the pursuit of this information that is critical to the eventual kill or capture of Zarqawi, relevant and important other links are established that reveal the breadth and depth of Zarqawi's contacts. This information is critical for other governmental agencies in their diplomatic pursuits of criminal and terrorist networks throughout the region and even those same networks and contacts that may reside within the United States.

Essentially, by exposing the entire network, the military and other governmental organizations are able to establish links that facilitate the arrest or targeting of other terrorist throughout the region and thereby furthered the safety and security of not only coalition members participating in Iraq but provided a certain amount of security in support of the homeland defense as well as possibly the prevention or interdiction of future planned attacks. Significant intelligence is gathered on the entire breadth and depth of the radical Islamist Salafi network, resulting in an increased level of global security and stability.

2. Domestic Morale

Regardless of the effectiveness of the decapitation strategy, a significant blow to the al-Qaeda network in Iraq was delivered when Zarqawi was killed in June 2006. Foremost, increased morale, not only for the troops that dedicated themselves toward the eventual operation that killed Zarqawi, but it can also be considered a morale boost for the American public. The public, for or against the war, wanted some kind of justice and wanted to see the man who was directly responsible for the grisly atrocities in Iraq brought to some kind of justice. With the operation that killed Zarqawi, the public was given that justice and benefited from the decapitation strategy.

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